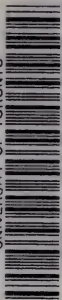


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DREAMS

BY

OLIVE SCHREINER



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DREAMS.

NOTE.—These Dreams are printed in the order in which they were written.

In the case of two there was a lapse of some years between the writing of the first and last parts; these are placed according to the date of the first part.

OLIVE SCHREINER.

MATJESFONTEIN, CAPE COLONY, SOUTH AFRICA,
November, 1890.

THE LOST JOY.

ALL day, where the sunlight played on the sea-shore, Life sat.

All day the soft wind played with her hair, and the young, young face looked out across the water. She was waiting—she was waiting; but she could not tell for what.

All day the waves ran up and up on the sand, and ran back again, and the pink shells rolled. Life sat waiting; all day, with the sunlight in her eyes, she sat there, till, grown weary, she laid her head upon her knee and fell asleep, waiting still.

Then a keel grated on the sand, and then a step was on the shore—Life awoke and heard it. A hand was laid upon her, and a great shudder passed through her. She looked up, and saw over her the strange, wide eyes of Love—and Life now knew for whom she had sat there waiting.

And Love drew Life up to him.

And of that meeting was born a thing rare and beautiful—Joy, First-Joy was it called. The sunlight when it shines upon the merry water is not so glad; the rose-buds, when they turn back their lips for the sun's first kiss, are not so ruddy. Its tiny pulses beat quick. It was so warm, so soft! It never spoke, but it laughed and played in the sunshine; and Love and Life rejoiced

exceedingly. Neither whispered it to the other, but deep in its own heart each said, "It shall be ours forever."

Then there came a time—was it after weeks? was it after months? (Love and Life do not measure time)—when the thing was not as it had been.

Still it played; still it laughed; still it stained its mouth with purple berries; but sometimes the little hands hung weary, and the little eyes looked out heavily across the water.

And Life and Love dared not look into each other's eyes, dared not say, "What ails our darling?" Each heart whispered to itself, "It is nothing, it is nothing, to-morrow it will laugh out clear." But to-morrow and to-morrow came. They journeyed on, and the child played beside them, but heavily, more heavily.

One day Life and Love lay down to sleep; and when they awoke, it was gone; only, near them, on the grass, sat a little stranger

with wide-open eyes, very soft and sad. Neither noticed it; but they walked apart, weeping bitterly, "Oh, our Joy! our lost Joy! shall we see you no more forever?"

The little soft and sad-eyed stranger slipped a hand into one hand of each, and drew them closer, and Life and Love walked on with it between them. And when Life looked down in anguish, she saw her tears reflected in its soft eyes. And when Love, mad with pain, cried out, "I am weary, I am weary! I can journey no further. The light is all behind, the dark is all before," a little rosy finger pointed where the sunlight lay upon the hillsides. Always its large eyes were sad and thoughtful; always the little brave mouth was smiling quietly.

When on the sharp stones Life cut her feet, he wiped the blood upon his garments, and kissed the wounded feet with his little lips. When in the desert Love lay down faint (for Love itself grows faint), he ran

over the hot sand with his little naked feet, and even there in the desert found water in the holes in the rocks to moisten Love's lips with. He was no burden—he never weighted them ; he only helped them forward on their journey.

When they came to the dark ravine where the icicles hang from the rocks—for Love and Life must pass through strange drear places—there, where all is cold, and the snow lies thick, he took their freezing hands and held them against his beating little heart, and warmed them—and softly he drew them on and on.

And when they came beyond, into the land of sunshine and flowers, strangely the great eyes lit up, and dimples broke out upon the face. Brightly laughing, it ran over the soft grass ; gathered honey from the hollow tree, and brought it them on the palm of its hand ; carried them water in the leaves of the lily, and gathered flowers and wreathed them round their heads,

softly laughing all the while. He touched them as their Joy had touched them, but his fingers clung more tenderly.

So they wandered on, through the dark lands and the light, always with that little brave smiling one between them. Sometimes they remembered that first radiant Joy, and whispered to themselves, "Oh! could we but find him also!"

At last they came to where Reflection sits; that strange old woman, who has always one elbow on her knee, and her chin in her hand, and who steals light out of the past to shed it on the future.

And Life and Love cried out, "O wise one! tell us: when first we met, a lovely radiant thing belonged to us—gladness without a tear, sunshine without a shade. Oh! how did we sin that we lost it? Where shall we go that we may find it?"

And she, the wise old woman, answered, "To have it back, will you give up that which walks beside you now?"

And in agony Love and Life cried, "No!"

"Give up this!" said Life. "When the thorns have pierced me, who will suck the poison out? When my head throbs, who will lay his tiny hands upon it and still the beating? In the cold and the dark, who will warm my freezing heart?"

And Love cried out, "Better let me die! Without Joy I can live; without this I cannot. Let me rather die, not lose it!"

And the wise old woman answered, "O fools and blind! What you once had is that which you have now! When Love and Life first meet, a radiant thing is born, without a shade. When the roads begin to roughen, when the shades begin to darken, when the days are hard, and the nights cold and long—then it begins to change. Love and Life *will* not see it, *will* not know it—till one day they start up suddenly, crying, 'O God! O God! we have lost it! Where is it?' They do not understand that they could not **carry** the laughing thing unchanged into

the desert, and the frost, and the snow. They do not know that what walks beside them still is the Joy grown older. The grave, sweet, tender thing—warm in the coldest snows, brave in the dreariest deserts—its name is Sympathy; it is the Perfect Love.”

SOUTH AFRICA.

THE HUNTER.

IN certain valleys there was a hunter. Day by day he went to hunt for wild-fowl in the woods ; and it chanced that once he stood on the shores of a large lake. While he stood waiting in the rushes for the coming of the birds, a great shadow fell on him, and in the water he saw a reflection. He looked up to the sky ; but the thing was gone. Then a burning desire came over him to see once again that reflection in the water, and all day he watched and waited ; but night came, and it had not returned. Then he went home with his empty bag, moody and silent. His comrades came questioning about him to know the reason, but he answered them nothing ; he sat alone and brooded. Then his friend came to him, and to him he spoke.

"I have seen to-day," he said, "that which I never saw before—a vast white bird, with silver wings outstretched, sailing in the everlasting blue. And now it is as though a great fire burnt within my breast. It was but a sheen, a shimmer, a reflection in the water; but now I desire nothing more on earth than to hold her."

His friend laughed.

"It was but a beam playing on the water, or the shadow of your own head. To-morrow you will forget her," he said.

But to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow the hunter walked alone. He sought in the forest and in the woods, by the lakes and among the rushes, but he could not find her. He shot no more wild-fowl; what were they to him?

"What ails him?" said his comrades.

"He is mad," said one.

"No, but he is worse," said another; "he would see that which none of us have seen, and make himself a wonder."

"Come, let us forswear his company," said all.

So the hunter walked alone.

One night, as he wandered in the shade, very heart-sore and weeping, an old man stood before him, grander and taller than the sons of men.

"Who are you?" asked the hunter.

"I am Wisdom," answered the old man; "but some men call me Knowledge. All my life I have grown in these valleys; but no man sees me till he has sorrowed much. The eyes must be washed with tears that are to behold me; and, according as a man has suffered, I speak."

And the hunter cried:

"Oh, you who have lived here so long, tell me, what is that great wild bird I have seen sailing in the blue? They would have me believe she is a dream; the shadow of my own head."

The old man smiled.

"Her name is Truth. He who has once

seen her never rests again. Till death he desires her."

And the hunter cried

"Oh, tell me where I may find her."

But the man said,

"You have not suffered enough," and went.

Then the hunter took from his breast the shuttle of Imagination, and wound on it the thread of his Wishes ; and all night he sat and wove a net.

In the morning he spread the golden net open on the ground, and into it he threw a few grains of credulity, which his father had left him, and which he kept in his breast-pocket. They were like white puff-balls, and when you trod on them a brown dust flew out. Then he sat by to see what would happen. The first that came into the net was a snow-white bird, with dove's eyes, and he sang a beautiful song—"A human-God! a human-God! a human-God!" it sang. The second that came was black and

mystical, with dark, lovely eyes, that looked into the depths of your soul, and he sang only this—"Immortality!"

And the hunter took them both in his arms, for he said :

"They are surely of the beautiful family of Truth."

Then came another, green and gold, who sang in a shrill voice, like one crying in the market-place: "Reward after Death! Reward after Death!"

And he said :

"You are not so fair ; but you are fair too," and he took it.

And others came, brightly colored, singing pleasant songs, till all the grains were finished. And the hunter gathered all his birds together, and built a strong iron cage called a new creed, and put all his birds in it.

Then the people came about, dancing and singing.

"Oh, happy hunter!" they cried. "Oh,

wonderful man ! Oh, delightful birds ! Oh, lovely songs ! ”

No one asked where the birds had come from, nor how they had been caught ; but they danced and sang before them. And the hunter too was glad, for he said :

“ Surely Truth is among them. In time she will moult her feathers, and I shall see her snow-white form.”

But the time passed, and the people sang and danced ; but the hunter’s heart grew heavy. He crept alone, as of old, to weep ; the terrible desire had awakened again in his breast. One day, as he sat alone weeping, it chanced that Wisdom met him. He told the old man what he had done.

And Wisdom smiled sadly.

“ Many men,” he said, “ have spread that net for Truth ; but they have never found her. On the grains of credulity she will not feed ; in the net of wishes her feet cannot be held ; in the air of these valleys she will not breathe. The birds you have

caught are of the brood of Lies. Lovely and beautiful, but still lies ; Truth knows them not."

And the hunter cried out in bitterness :

"And must I then sit still to be devoured of this great burning ?"

And the old man said :

"Listen, and in that you have suffered much and wept much, I will tell you what I know. He who sets out to search for Truth must leave these valleys of superstition forever, taking with him not one shred that has belonged to them. Alone he must wander down into the Land of Absolute Negation and Denial ; he must abide there ; he must resist temptation ; when the light breaks he must arise and follow it into the country of dry sunshine. The mountains of stern reality will rise before him ; he must climb them ; *beyond* them lies Truth."

"And he will hold her fast ! he will hold her in his hands !" the hunter cried.

Wisdom shook his head.

"He will never see her, never hold her. The time is not yet."

"Then there is no hope?" cried the hunter.

"There is this," said Wisdom. "Some men have climbed on those mountains; circle above circle of bare rock they have scaled; and, wandering there, in those high regions, some have chanced to pick up on the ground one white, silver feather, dropped from the wing of Truth. And it shall come to pass," said the old man, raising himself prophetically and pointing with his finger to the sky, "it shall come to pass, that, when enough of those silver feathers shall have been gathered by the hands of men, and shall have been woven into a cord, and the cord into a net, that in *that* net Truth may be captured. *Nothing but Truth can hold Truth.*"

The hunter arose. "I will go," he said. But Wisdom detained him.

"Mark you well—who leaves these val-

leys *never* returns to them. Though he should weep tears of blood seven days and nights upon the confines, he can never put his foot across them. Left—they are left forever. Upon the road which you would travel there is no reward offered. Who goes, goes freely—for the great love that is in him. The work is his reward.”

“I go,” said the hunter; “but upon the mountains, tell me, which path shall I take?”

“I am the child of The-Accumulated-Knowledge-of-Ages,” said the man; “I can walk only where many men have trodden. On these mountains few feet have passed; each man strikes out a path for himself. He goes at his own peril; my voice he hears no more. I may follow after him, but I cannot go before him.”

Then Knowledge vanished.

And the hunter turned. He went to his cage, and with his hands broke down the bars, and the jagged iron tore his flesh. It is sometimes easier to build than to break.

One by one he took his plumed birds and let them fly. But, when he came to his dark-plumed bird, he held it, and looked into its beautiful eyes, and the bird uttered its low, deep cry—"Immortality!"

And he said, quickly, "I cannot part with it. It is not heavy; it eats no food. I will hide it in my breast; I will take it with me." And he buried it there, and covered it over with his cloak.

But the thing he had hidden grew heavier, heavier, heavier—till it lay on his breast like lead. He could not move with it. He could not leave those valleys with it. Then again he took it out and looked at it.

"Oh, my beautiful, my heart's own!" he cried, "may I not keep you?"

He opened his hands sadly.

"Go," he said. "It may happen that in Truth's song one note is like to yours; but I shall never hear it."

Sadly he opened his hand, and the bird flew from him forever.

Then from the shuttle of Imagination he took the thread of his wishes, and threw it on the ground; and the empty shuttle he put into his breast, for the thread was made in those valleys, but the shuttle came from an unknown country. He turned to go, but now the people came about him, howling.

"Fool, hound, demented lunatic!" they cried. "How dared you break your cage and let the birds fly?"

The hunter spoke; but they would not hear him.

"Truth! who is she? Can you eat her? can you drink her? Who has ever seen her? Your birds were real; all could hear them sing! Oh, fool! vile reptile! atheist!" they cried, "you pollute the air."

"Come, let us take up stones and stone him," cried some.

"What affair is it of ours?" said others. "Let the idiot go;" and went away. But the rest gathered up stones and mud and threw at him. At last, when he was bruised

and cut, the hunter crept away into the woods. And it was evening about him.

He wandered on and on, and the shade grew deeper. He was on the borders now of the land where it is always night. Then he stepped into it, and there was no light there. With his hands he groped; but each branch as he touched it broke off, and the earth was covered with cinders. At every step his foot sank in, and a fine cloud of impalpable ashes flew up into his face; and it was dark. So he sat down upon a stone and buried his face in his hands, to wait in that Land of Negation and Denial till the light came.

And it was night in his heart also.

Then from the marshes to his right and left cold mists arose and closed about him. A fine, imperceptible rain fell in the dark, and great drops gathered on his hair and clothes. His heart beat slowly, and a numbness crept through all his limbs. Then, looking up, two merry wisp-lights came

dancing. He lifted his head to look at them. Nearer, nearer they came. So warm, so bright, they danced like stars of fire. They stood before him at last. From the center of the radiating flame in one looked out a woman's face, laughing, dimpled, with streaming yellow hair. In the center of the other were merry laughing ripples, like the bubbles on a glass of wine. They danced before him.

"Who are you," asked the hunter, "who alone come to me in my solitude and darkness?"

"We are the twins Sensuality," they cried. "Our father's name is Human-Nature, and our mother's name is Excess. We are as old as the hills and rivers, as old as the first man; but we never die," they laughed.

"Oh, let me wrap my arms about you!" cried the first; "they are soft and warm. Your heart is frozen now, but I will **make** it beat. Oh, come to me!"

"I will pour my hot life into you," said the second; "your brain is numb, and your limbs are dead now; but they shall live with a fierce, free life. Oh, let me pour it in!"

"Oh, follow us," they cried, "and live with us. Nobler hearts than yours have sat here in this darkness to wait, and they have come to us and we to them; and they have never left us, never. All else is a delusion, but *we* are real, we are real. Truth is a shadow; the valleys of superstition are a farce; the earth is of ashes, the trees all rotten; but we—feel us—we live! You cannot doubt us. Feel us, how warm we are! Oh, come to us! Come with us!"

Nearer and nearer round his head they hovered, and the cold drops melted on his forehead. The bright light shot into his eyes, dazzling him, and the frozen blood began to run. And he said:

"Yes; why should I die here in this awful darkness? They are warm, they

melt my frozen blood!" and he stretched out his hands to take them.

Then in a moment there arose before him the image of the thing he had loved, and his hands dropped to his side.

"Oh, come to us!" they cried.

But he buried his face.

"You dazzle my eyes," he cried, "you make my heart warm; but you cannot give me what I desire. I will wait here—wait till I die. Go!"

He covered his face with his hands and would not listen; and when he looked up again they were two twinkling stars, that vanished in the distance.

And the long, long night rolled on.

All who leave the valley of superstition pass through that dark land; but some go through it in a few days, some linger there for months, some for years, and some die there.

At last for the hunter a faint light played along the horizon, and he rose to follow it; and he reached that light at last, and stepped

into the broad sunshine. Then before him rose the almighty mountains of Dry-facts and Realities. The clear sunshine played on them, and the tops were lost in the clouds. At the foot many paths ran up. An exultant cry burst from the hunter. He chose the straightest and began to climb; and the rocks and ridges resounded with his song. They had exaggerated; after all, it was not so high, nor was the road so steep! A few days, a few weeks, a few months at most, and then the top! Not one feather only would he pick up; he would gather all that other men had found—weave the net—capture Truth—hold her fast—touch her with his hands—clasp her.

He laughed in the merry sunshine, and sang loud. Victory was very near. Nevertheless, after a while the path grew steeper. He needed all his breath for climbing, and the singing died away. On the right and left rose huge rocks, devoid of lichen or moss, and in the lava-like earth chasms

yawned. Here and there he saw a sheen of white bones. Now, too, the path began to grow less and less marked ; then it became a mere trace, with a foot-mark here and there ; then it ceased altogether. He sang no more, but struck forth a path for himself, until he reached a mighty wall of rock, smooth and without break, stretching as far as the eye could see. "I will rear a stair against it ; and, once this wall climbed, I shall be almost there," he said bravely and worked. With his shuttle of Imagination he dug out stones ; but half of them would not fit, and half a month's work would roll down because those below were ill chosen. But the hunter worked on, saying always to himself, "Once this wall climbed, I shall be almost there. This great work ended !"

At last he came out upon the top, and he looked about him. Far below rolled the white mist over the valleys of superstition, and above him towered the mountains. They had seemed low before ; they were

of an immeasurable height now, from crown to foundation surrounded by walls of rock, that rose tier above tier in mighty circles. Upon them played the eternal sunshine. He uttered a wild cry. He bowed himself on to the earth, and when he rose his face was white. In absolute silence he walked on. He was very silent now. In those high regions the rarefied air is hard to breathe by those born in the valleys ; every breath he drew hurt him, and the blood oozed out from the tips of his fingers. Before the next wall of rock he began to work. The height of this seemed infinite, and he said nothing. The sound of his tool rang night and day upon the iron rocks into which he cut steps. Years passed over him, yet he worked on ; but the wall towered up always above him to heaven. Sometimes he prayed that a little moss or lichen might spring up on those bare walls to be a companion to him ; but it never came.

And the years rolled on ; he counted them

by the steps he had cut—a few for a year—only a few. He sang no more; he said no more, “I will do this or that”—he only worked. And at night, when the twilight settled down, there looked out at him from the holes and crevices in the rocks strange wild faces.

“Stop your work, you lonely man, and speak to us,” they cried.

“My salvation is in work. If I should stop but for one moment you would creep down upon me,” he replied. And they put out their long necks further.

“Look down into the crevice at your feet,” they said. “See what lie there—white bones! As brave and strong a man as you climbed to these rocks. And he looked up. He saw there was no use in striving; he would never hold Truth, never see her, never find her. So he lay down here, for he was very tired. He went to sleep forever. He put himself to sleep. Sleep is very tranquil. You are not lonely when you are

asleep, neither do your hands ache, nor your heart." And the hunter laughed between his teeth.

"Have I torn from my heart all that was dearest; have I wandered alone in the land of night; have I resisted temptation; have I dwelt where the voice of my kind is never heard, and labored alone, to lie down and be food for you, ye harpies?"

He laughed fiercely; and the Echoes of Despair slunk away, for the laugh of a brave, strong heart is as a death-blow to them.

Nevertheless they crept out again and looked at him.

"Do you know that your hair is white?" they said, "that your hands begin to tremble like a child's? Do you see that the point of your shuttle is gone?—it is cracked already. If you should ever climb this stair," they said, "it will be your last. You will never climb another."

And he answered, "*I know it!*" and worked on.

The old, thin hands cut the stones ill and jaggedly, for the fingers were stiff and bent. The beauty and the strength of the man were gone.

At last, an old, wizened, shrunken face looked out above the rocks. It saw the eternal mountains rise with walls to the white clouds; but its work was done.

The old hunter folded his tired hands and lay down by the precipice where he had worked away his life. It was the sleeping-time at last. Below him over the valleys rolled the thick white mist. Once it broke; and through the gap the dying eyes looked down on the trees and fields of their childhood. From afar seemed borne to him the cry of his own wild birds, and he heard the noise of people singing as they danced. And he thought he heard among them the voices of his old comrades, and he saw far off the sunlight shine on his early home. And great tears gathered in the hunter's eyes.

"Ah! they who die there do not die alone," he cried.

Then the mists rolled together again; and he turned his eyes away.

"I have sought," he said, "for long years I have labored; but I have not found her. I have not rested, I have not repined, and I have not seen her; now my strength is gone. Where I lie down worn out, other men will stand, young and fresh. By the steps that I have cut they will climb; by the stairs that I have built, they will mount. They will never know the name of the man who made them. At the clumsy work they will laugh; when the stones roll they will curse me. But they will mount, and on *my* work; they will climb, and by *my* stair! They will find her, and through me! And no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

The tears rolled from beneath the shriveled eyelids. If Truth had appeared above him in the clouds now he could not have seen her; the mist of death was in his eyes.

"My soul hears their glad step coming," he said; "and they shall mount! they shall mount!" He raised his shriveled hand to his eyes.

Then slowly from the white sky above, through the still air, came something falling, falling, falling. Softly it fluttered down, and dropped onto the breast of the dying man. He felt it with his hands. It was a feather. He died holding it.

THE GARDENS OF PLEASURE.

SHE walked upon the beds, and the sweet, rich scent arose ; and she gathered her hands full of flowers. Then Duty, with his white, clear features, came and looked at her. Then she ceased from gathering, but she walked away among the flowers, smiling, and with her hands full.

Then Duty, with his still, white face, came again, and looked at her ; but she, she turned her head away from him. At last she saw his face, and she dropped the fairest of the flowers she had held, and walked silently away.

Then again he came to her. And she moaned, and bent her head low, and turned to the gate. But as she went out she looked back at the sunlight on the faces of the flowers, and wept in anguish. Then she

went out, and it shut behind her forever; but still in her hand she held of the buds she had gathered, and the scent was very sweet in the lonely desert.

But he followed her. Once more he stood before her with his still, white, death-like face. And she knew what he had come for; she unbent the fingers, and let the flowers drop out, the flowers she had loved so, and walked on without them, with dry, aching eyes. Then for the last time he came. And she showed him her empty hands, the hands that held nothing now. But still he looked. Then at length she opened her bosom and took out of it one small flower she had hidden there, and laid it on the sand. She had nothing more to give now, and she wandered away, and the gray sand whirled about her.

IN A FAR-OFF WORLD.

THERE is a world in one of the far-off stars, and things do not happen here as they happen there.

In that world were a man and woman; they had one work, and they walked together side by side on many days, and were friends—and that is a thing that happens now and then in this world also.

But there was something in that star-world that there is not here. There was a thick wood; where the trees grew closest, and the stems were interlocked, and the summer sun never shone, there stood a shrine. In the day all was quiet, but at night, when the stars shone or the moon glinted on the tree-tops, and all was quiet below, if one crept here quite alone and

knelt on the steps of the stone altar, and uncovering one's breast, so wounded it that the blood fell down on the altar steps, then whatever he who knelt there wished for was granted him. And all this happens, as I said, because it is a far-off world and things often happen there as they do not happen here.

Now, the man and woman walked together; and the woman wished well to the man. One night when the moon was shining so that the leaves of all the trees glinted, and the waves of the sea were silvery, the woman walked alone to the forest. It was dark there; the moonlight fell only in little flecks on the dead leaves under her feet, and the branches were knotted tight overhead. Farther in it got darker, not even a fleck of moonlight shone. Then she came to the shrine; she knelt down before it and prayed; there came no answer. Then she uncovered her breast; with a sharp two-edged stone that lay there she wounded it. The drops

dripped slowly down on to the stone, and a voice cried, "What do you seek?"

She answered, "There is a man; I hold him nearer than anything. I would give him the best of all blessings."

The voice said, "What is it?"

The girl said, "I know not, but that which is most good for him I wish him to have."

The voice said, "Your prayer is answered; he shall have it."

Then she stood up. She covered her breast and held the garment tight upon it with her hand, and ran out of the forest, and the dead leaves fluttered under her feet. Out in the moonlight the soft air was blowing, and the sand glittered on the beach. She ran along the smooth shore, then suddenly she stood still. Out across the water there was something moving. She shaded her eyes and looked. It was a boat; it was sliding swiftly over the moonlit water out to sea. One stood upright in it; the

face the moonlight did not show, but the figure she knew. It was passing swiftly; it seemed as if no one propelled it; the moonlight's shimmer did not let her see clearly, and the boat was far from shore, but it seemed almost as if there was another figure sitting in the stern. Faster and faster it glided over the water away, away. She ran along the shore; she came no nearer it. The garment she had held closed fluttered open; she stretched out her arms, and the moonlight shone on her long loose hair.

Then a voice beside her whispered, "What is it?"

She cried, "With my blood I bought the best of all gifts for him. I have come to bring it him! He is going from me!"

The voice whispered softly, "Your prayer was answered. It was given him."

She cried, "What is it?"

The voice answered, "It is that he might leave you."

The girl stood still.

Far out at sea the boat was lost to sight
beyond the moonlight sheen.

The voice spoke softly, "Art thou contented?"

She said, "I am contented."

At her feet the waves broke in long ripples softly on the shore.

THREE DREAMS IN A DESERT.

UNDER A MIMOSA-TREE.

As I traveled across an African plain the sun shone down hotly. Then I drew my horse up under a mimosa-tree, and I took the saddle from him and left him to feed among the parched bushes. And all to right and to left stretched the brown earth. And I sat down under the tree, because the heat beat fiercely, and all along the horizon the air throbbed. And after a while a heavy drowsiness came over me, and I laid my head down against my saddle, and I fell asleep there. And, in my sleep, I had a curious dream.

I thought I stood on the border of a great desert, and the sand blew about everywhere.

And I thought I saw two great figures like beasts of burden of the desert, and one lay upon the sand with its neck stretched out, and one stood by it. And I looked curiously at the one that lay upon the ground, for it had a great burden on its back, and the sand was thick about it so that it seemed to have piled over it for centuries.

And I looked very curiously at it. And there stood one beside me watching. And I said to him, "What is this huge creature who lies here on the sand?"

And he said, "This is woman; she that bears men in her body."

And I said, "Why does she lie here motionless with the sand piled round her?"

And he answered, "Listen, I will tell you! Ages and ages long she has lain here, and the wind has blown over her. The oldest, oldest, oldest man living has never seen her move; the, oldest oldest book records that she lay here then, as she lies here now, with the sand about her. But

listen! Older than the oldest book, older than the oldest recorded memory of man, on the Rocks of Language, on the hard-baked clay of Ancient Customs, now crumbling to decay, are found the marks of her footsteps! Side by side with his who stands beside her you may trace them; and you know that she who now lies there once wandered free over the rocks with him."

And I said, "Why does she lie there now?"

And he said, "I take it, ages ago the Age-of-dominion-of-muscular-force found her, and when she stooped low to give suck to her young, and her back was broad, he put his burden of subjection on to it, and tied it on with the broad band of Inevitable Necessity. Then she looked at the earth and the sky, and knew there was no hope for her; and she lay down on the sand with the burden she could not loosen. Ever since she has lain here. And the ages have come, and the ages have gone, but the

band of Inevitable Necessity has not been cut."

And I looked and saw in her eyes the terrible patience of the centuries; the ground was wet with her tears, and her nostrils blew up the sand.

And I said, "Has she ever tried to move?"

And he said, "Sometimes a limb has quivered. But she is wise; she knows she cannot rise with the burden on her."

And I said, "Why does not he who stands by her leave her and go on?"

And he said, "He cannot. Look——"

And I saw a broad band passing along the ground from one to the other, and it bound them together.

He said, "While she lies there he must stand and look across the desert."

And I said, "Does he know why he cannot move?"

And he said, "No."

And I heard a sound of something crack-

ing, and I looked, and I saw the band that bound the burden on to her back broken asunder; and the burden rolled on to the ground

And I said, "What is this?"

And he said, "The Age-of-muscular-force is dead. The Age-of-nervous-force has killed him with the knife he holds in his hand; and silently and invisibly he has crept up to the woman, and with that knife of Mechanical Invention he has cut the band that bound the burden to her back. The Inevitable Necessity is broken. She might rise now."

And I saw that she still lay motionless on the sand, with her eyes open and her neck stretched out. And she seemed to look for something on the far-off border of the desert that never came. And I wondered if she were awake or asleep. And as I looked her body quivered, and a light came into her eyes, like when a sunbeam breaks into a dark room.

I said, "What is it?"

He whispered, "Hush! the thought has come to her, 'Might I not rise?'"

And I looked. And she raised her head from the sand, and I saw the dent where her neck had lain so long. And she looked at the earth, and she looked at the sky, and she looked at him who stood by her; but he looked out across the desert.

And I saw her body quiver; and she pressed her front knees to the earth, and veins stood out; and I cried, "She is going to rise!"

But only her sides heaved, and she lay still where she was.

But her head she held up; she did not lay it down again. And he beside me said, "She is very weak. See, her legs have been crushed under her so long."

And I saw the creature struggle; and the drops stood out on her.

And I said, "Surely he who stands beside her will help her?"

And he beside me answered, "He cannot help her; *she must help herself*. Let her struggle till she is strong."

And I cried, "At least he will not hinder her! See, he moves farther from her, and tightens the cord between them, and he drags her down."

And he answered, "He does not understand. When she moves she draws the band that binds them, and hurts him, and he moves farther from her. The day will come when he will understand, and will know what she is doing. Let her once stagger on to her knees. In that day he will stand close to her, and look into her eyes with sympathy."

And she stretched her neck, and the drops fell from her. And the creature rose an inch from the earth and sank back.

And I cried, "Oh, she is too weak! she cannot walk! The long years have taken all her strength from her. Can she never move?"

And he answered me, "See the light in her eyes!"

And slowly the creature staggered on to its knees.

And I awoke; and all to the east and to the west stretched the barren earth, with the dry bushes on it. The ants ran up and down in the red sand, and the heat beat fiercely. I looked up through the thin branches of the tree at the blue sky overhead. I stretched myself, and I mused over the dream I had had. And I fell asleep again, with my head on my saddle. And in the fierce heat I had another dream.

I saw a desert and I saw a woman coming out of it. And she came to the bank of a dark river; and the bank was steep and high.* And on it an old man met her, who had a long white beard; and a stick that

* The banks of an African river are sometimes a hundred feet high, and consist of deep shifting sands through which in the course of ages the river has worn its gigantic bed.

curled was in his hand, and on it was written Reason. And he asked her what she wanted; and she said, "I am woman; and I am seeking for the land of Freedom."

And he said, "It is before you."

And she said, "I see nothing before me but a dark flowing river, and a bank steep and high, and cuttings here and there with heavy sand in them."

And he said, "And beyond that?"

She said, "I see nothing, but sometimes, when I shade my eyes with my hand, I think I see on the further bank trees and hills, and the sun shining on them!"

He said, "That is the Land of Freedom."

She said, "How am I to get there?"

He said, "There is one way, and one only. Down the banks of Labor, through the water of Suffering. There is no other."

She said "Is there no bridge?"

He answered, "None."

She said, "Is the water deep?"

He said, "Deep."

She said, "Is the floor worn?"

He said, "It is. Your foot may slip at any time, and you may be lost."

She said, "Have any crossed already?"

He said, "Some have *tried*!"

She said, "Is there a track to show where the best fording is?"

He said, "It has to be made."

She shaded her eyes with her hand; and she said, "I will go."

And he said, "You must take off the clothes you wore in the desert; they are dragged down by them who go into the water so clothed."

And she threw from her gladly the mantle of Ancient-received-opinions she wore, for it was worn full of holes. And she took the girdle from her waist that she had treasured so long, and the moths flew out of it in a cloud, And he said, "Take the shoes of Dependence off your feet."

And she stood there naked, but for one white garment that clung close to her.

And he said, "That you may keep. So they wear clothes in the land of Freedom. In the water it buoys; it always swims."

And I saw on its breast was written Truth; and it was white; the sun had not often shone on it; the other clothes had covered it up. And he said, "Take this stick; hold it fast. In that day when it slips from your hand you are lost. Put it down before you; feel your way; where it cannot find a bottom do not set your foot."

And she said, "I am ready; let me go."

And he said, "No—but stay; what is that—in your breast?"

She was silent.

He said, "Open it, and let me see."

And she opened it. And against her breast was a tiny thing, who drank from it, and the yellow curls above his forehead pressed against it; and his knees were drawn up to her, and he held her breast fast with his hands.

And Reason said, "Who is he, and what is he doing here?"

And she said, "See his little wings——"

And Reason said, "Put him down."

And she said, "He is asleep, and he is drinking! I will carry him to the Land of Freedom. He has been a child so long, so long, I have carried him. In the land of Freedom he will be a man. We will walk together there, and his great white wings will overshadow me. He has lisped one word only to me in the desert—'Passion!' I have dreamed he might learn to say 'Friendship' in that land."

And Reason said, "Put him down!"

And she said, "I will carry him so—with one arm, and with the other I will fight the water."

He said, "Lay him down on the ground. When you are in the water you will forget to fight, you will think only of him. Lay him down." He said, "He will not die. When he finds you have left him alone he

will open his wings and fly. He will be in the Land of Freedom before you. Those who reach the Land of Freedom, the first hand they see stretching down the bank to help them shall be Love's. He will be a man then, not a child. In your breast he cannot thrive; put him down that he may grow."

And she took her bosom from his mouth, and he bit her, so that the blood ran down on to the ground. And she laid him down on the earth; and she covered her wound. And she bent and stroked his wings. And I saw the hair on her forehead turned white as snow, and she had changed from youth to age.

And she stood far off on the bank of the river. And she said, "For what do I go to this far land which no one has ever reached? *Oh, I am alone! I am utterly alone!*"

And Reason, that old man, said to her, "Silence! what do you hear?"

And she listened intently, and she said,

“I hear a sound of feet, a thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and they beat this way !”

He said, “They are the feet of those that shall follow you. Lead on ! make a track to the water’s edge ! Where you stand now the ground will be beaten flat by ten thousand times ten thousand feet.” And he said, “Have you seen the locusts how they cross a stream ? First one comes down to the water-edge, and it is swept away, and then another comes and then another, and then another, and at last with their bodies piled up a bridge is built and the rest pass over.”

She said, “And, of those that come first, some are swept away, and are heard of no more ; their bodies do not even build the bridge ?”

“And are swept away, and are heard of no more—and what of that ?” he said.

“And what of that——” she said.

“They make a track to the water’s edge.”

"They make a track to the water's edge——." And she said, "Over that bridge which shall be built with our bodies, who will pass?"

He said, "*The entire human race.*"

And the woman grasped her staff.

And I saw her turn down that dark path to the river.

And I awoke; and all about me was the yellow afternoon light; the sinking sun lit up the fingers of the milk bushes; and my horse stood by me quietly feeding. And I turned on my side, and I watched the ants run by thousands in the red sand. I thought I would go on my way now—the afternoon was cooler. Then a drowsiness crept over me again, and I laid back my head and fell asleep.

And I dreamed a dream.

I dreamed I saw a land. And on the hills walked brave women and brave men, hand in hand. And they looked into each other's eyes, and they were not afraid.

And I saw the women also hold each other's hands.

And I said to him beside me, "What place is this?"

And he said, "This is heaven."

And I said, "Where is it?"

And he answered, "On earth."

And I said, "When shall these things be?"

And he answered, "IN THE FUTURE."

And I awoke, and all about me was the sunset light; and on the low hills the sun lay, and a delicious coolness had crept over everything; and the ants were going slowly home. And I walked toward my horse, who stood quietly feeding. Then the sun passed down behind the hills; but I knew that the next day he would arise again.

A DREAM OF WILD BEES.

A MOTHER sat alone at an open window. Through it came the voices of the children as they played under the acacia-trees, and the breath of the hot afternoon air. In and out of the room flew the bees, the wild bees, with their legs yellow with pollen, going to and from the acacia-trees, droning all the while. She sat on a low chair before the table and darned. She took her work from the great basket that stood before her on the table: some lay on her knee and half covered the book that rested there. She watched the needle go in and out; and the dreary hum of the bees and the noise of the children's voices became a confused murmur in her ears, as she worked slowly and more slowly. Then the bees, the long-legged,

wasp-like fellows who make no honey, flew closer and closer to her head, droning. Then she grew more and more drowsy, and she laid her hand, with the stocking over it, on the edge of the table, and leaned her head upon it. And the voices of the children outside grew more and more dreamy, came now far, now near; then she did not hear them, but she felt under her heart where the ninth child lay. Bent forward and sleeping there, with the bees flying about her head, she had a weird brain-picture; she thought the bees lengthened and lengthened themselves out and became human creatures and moved round and round her. Then one came to her softly, saying, "Let me lay my hand upon thy side where the child sleeps. If I shall touch him he shall be as I."

She asked, "Who are you?"

And he said, "I am Health. Whom I touch will have always the red blood dancing in his veins; he will not know weariness

nor pain; life will be a long laugh to him."

"No," said another, "let me touch; for I am Wealth. If I touch him material care shall not feed on him. He shall live on the blood and sinews of his fellow-men, if he will; and what his eye lusts for, his hand will have. He shall not know 'I want.'" And the child lay still like lead.

And another said, "Let me touch him: I am Fame. The man I touch, I lead to a high hill where all men may see him. When he dies he is not forgotten, his name rings down the centuries, each echoes it on to his fellows. Think—not to be forgotten through the ages!"

And the mother lay breathing steadily, but in the brain-picture they pressed closer to her.

"Let me touch the child," said one, "for I am Love. If I touch him he shall not walk through life alone. In the greatest dark, when he puts out his hand he shall find

another hand by it. When the world is against him, another shall say, ‘*You and I.*’” And the child trembled.

But another pressed close and said, “Let me touch; for I am Talent. I can do all things—that have been done before. I touch the soldier, the statesman, the thinker, and the politician who succeed; and the writer who is never before his time, and never behind it. If I touch the child he shall not weep for failure.”

About the mother’s head the bees were flying, touching her with their long tapering limbs; and, in her brain-picture, out of the shadow of the room came one with sallow face, deep-lined, the cheeks drawn into hollows, and a mouth smiling quiveringly. He stretched out his hand. And the mother drew back, and cried, “Who are you?” He answered nothing; and she looked up between his eyelids. And she said, “What can you give the child—health?” And he said, “The man I touch, there wakes up in

his blood a burning fever, that shall lick his blood as fire. The fever that I will give him shall be cured when his life is cured."

"You give wealth?"

He shook his head. "The man whom I touch, when he bends to pick up gold, he sees suddenly a light over his head in the sky; while he looks up to see it, the gold slips from between his fingers, or sometimes another passing takes it from him."

"Fame?"

He answered, "Likely not. For the man I touch there is a path traced out in the sand by a finger which no man sees. That he must follow. Sometimes it leads almost to the top, and then turns down suddenly into the valley. He must follow it, though none else sees the tracing."

"Love?"

He said, "He shall hunger for it—but he shall not find it. When he stretches out his arms to it, and would lay his heart against a thing he loves, then, far off along

the horizon he shall see a light play. He must go toward it. The thing he loves will not journey with him; he must travel alone. When he presses somewhat to his burning heart, crying 'Mine, mine, my own!' he shall hear a voice—'Renounce! renounce! this is not thine!'"

"He shall succeed?"

He said, "He shall fail. When he runs with others they shall reach the goal before him. For strange voices shall call to him and strange lights shall beckon him, and he must wait and listen. And this shall be the strangest; far off across the burning sands where, to other men, there is only the desert's waste, he shall see a blue sea! On that sea the sun shines always, and the water is blue as burning amethyst, and the foam is white on the shore. A great land rises from it, and he shall see upon the mountain-tops burning gold."

The mother said, "He shall reach it?"

And he smiled curiously.

She said, "It is real?"

And he said, "What *is* real?"

And she looked up between his half-closed eyelids, and said, "Touch."

And he leaned forward and laid his hand upon the sleeper, and whispered to it, smiling; and this only she heard—" *This shall be thy reward—that the ideal shall be real to thee.*"

And the child trembled; but the mother slept on heavily and her brain-picture vanished. But deep within her the antenatal thing that lay here had a dream. In those eyes that had never seen the day, in that half-shaped brain was a sensation of light! Light—that it never had seen. Light—that perhaps it never should see. Light—that existed somewhere!

And already it had its reward: the Ideal was real to it.

LONDON.

IN A RUINED CHAPEL.

THERE are four bare walls; there is a Christ upon the walls, in red, carrying his cross; there is a Blessèd Bambino with the face rubbed out; there is a Madonna in blue and red; there are Roman soldiers and a Christ with tied hands. All the roof is gone; overhead is the blue, blue Italian sky; the rain has beaten holes in the walls, and the plaster is peeling from it. The chapel stands here alone upon the promontory, and by day and by night the sea breaks at its feet. Some say that it was set here by the monks from the island down below, that they might bring their sick here in times of deadly plague. Some say that it was set here that the passing monks and friars, as they hurried by upon the roadway, might stop and say their prayers here. Now no one stops

to pray here, and the sick come no more to be healed.

Behind it runs the old Roman road. If you climb it and come and sit there alone on a hot sunny day you may almost hear at last the clink of the Roman soldiers upon the pavement, and the sound of that older time, as you sit there in the sun, when Hannibal and his men broke through the brushwood, and no road was.

Now it is very quiet. Sometimes a peasant girl comes riding by between her panniers, and you hear the mule's feet beat upon the bricks of the pavement; sometimes an old woman goes past with a bundle of weeds upon her head, or a brigand-looking man hurries by with a bundle of sticks in his hand; but for the rest the Chapel lies here alone upon the promontory, between the two bays and hears the sea break at its feet.

I came here one winter's day when the midday sun shone hot on the bricks of the Roman road. I was weary, and the way

seemed steep. I walked into the chapel to the broken window, and looked out across the bay. Far off, across the blue, blue water, were towns and villages, hanging white and red dots, upon the mountain-sides, and the blue mountains rose up into the sky, and now stood out from it and now melted back again.

The mountains seemed calling to me, but I knew there would never be a bridge built from them to me; never, never, never! I shaded my eyes with my hand and turned away. I could not bear to look at them.

I walked through the ruined Chapel, and looked at the Christ in red, carrying his cross, and the Blessèd rubbed-out Bambino, and the Roman soldiers, and the folded hands, and the reed; and I went and sat down in the open porch upon a stone. At my feet was the small bay, with its white row of houses buried among the olive-trees; the water broke in a long, thin, white line of foam along the shore; and I leaned my

elbows on my knees. I was tired, very tired; tired with a tiredness that seemed older than the heat of the day and the shining of the sun on the bricks of the Roman road; and I lay my head upon my knees; I heard the breaking of the water on the rocks three hundred feet below, and the rustling of the wind among the olive-trees and the ruined arches, and then I fell asleep there. I had a dream.

A man cried up to God, and God sent down an angel to help him; and the angel came back and said, "I cannot help that man."

God said, "How is it with him?"

And the angel said, "He cries out continually that one has injured him; and he would forgive him and he cannot."

God said, "What have you done for him?"

The angel said, "All ——. I took him by the hand, and I said, 'See, when other men speak ill of that man do you speak well of

him ; secretly, in ways he shall not know, serve him ; if you have anything you value share it with him, so, serving him, you will at last come to feel possession in him, and you will forgive.' And he said, 'I will do it.' Afterward, as I passed by in the dark of night, I heard one crying out, 'I have done all. It helps nothing! My speaking well of him helps me nothing! If I share my heart's blood with him, is the burning within me less? I cannot forgive; I cannot forgive! Oh, God, I cannot forgive!

"I said to him, 'See here, look back on all your past. See from your childhood all smallness, all indirectness that has been yours; look well at it, and in its light do you not see every man your brother? Are you so sinless you have right to hate?'

"He looked, and said, 'Yes, you are right; I too have failed, and I forgive my fellow. Go, I am satisfied; I have forgiven;' and he laid him down peacefully and folded his hands on his breast, and I thought it was

well with him. But scarcely had my wings rustled and I turned to come up here, when I heard one crying out on earth again, 'I cannot forgive! I cannot forgive! Oh, God, God, I cannot forgive! It is better to die than to hate! I cannot forgive! I cannot forgive!' And I went and stood outside his door in the dark, and I heard him cry, 'I have not sinned so, not so! If I have torn my fellow's flesh ever so little, I have kneeled down and kissed the wound with my mouth till it was healed. I have not willed that any soul should be lost through hate of me. If they have but fancied that I wronged them I have lain down on the ground before them that they might tread on me, and so, seeing my humiliation, forgive and not be lost through hating me; they have not cared that my soul should be lost; they have not willed to save me; they have not tried that I should forgive them!'

"I said to him, 'See here, be thou content;

do *not* forgive; forget this soul and its injury; go on your way. In the next world perhaps——’

“He cried, ‘Go from me, you understand nothing! What is the next world to me! I am lost now, to-day. I cannot see the sunlight shine, the dust is in my throat, the sand is in my eyes! Go from me, you know nothing! Oh, once again before I die to see that the world is beautiful! Oh, God, God, I cannot live and not love. I cannot live and hate. Oh, God, God, God!’ So I left him crying out and came back here.”

God said, “This man’s soul must be saved.”

And the angel said, “How?”

God said, “Go down you, and save it.”

The angel said, “What more shall I do?”

Then God bent down and whispered in the angel’s ear, and the angel spread out its wings and went down to earth.

And partly I woke, sitting there upon the

broken stone with my head on my knee ; but I was too weary to rise. I heard the wind roam through the olive-trees and among the ruined arches, and then I slept again.

The angel went down and found the man with the bitter heart and took him by the hand, and led him to a certain spot.

Now the man wist not where it was the angel would take him nor what he would show him there. And when they came the angel shaded the man's eyes with his wing, and when he moved it, the man saw somewhat on the earth before them. For God had given it to that angel to unclothe a human soul ; to take from it all those outward attributes of form and color, and age, and sex, whereby one man is known from among his fellows and is marked off from the rest, and the soul lay before them, bare, as a man turning his eye inward beholds himself.

They saw its past, its childhood, the tiny life with the dew upon it ; they saw its youth

when the dew was melting, and the creature raised its Liliputian mouth to drink from a cup too large for it, and they saw how the water spilt; they saw its hopes that were never realized; they saw its hours of intellectual blindness, men call sin; they saw its hours of all-radiating insight, which men call righteousness; they saw its hour of strength, when it leaped to its feet crying, "I am omnipotent;" its hour of weakness, when it fell to the earth and grasped dust only; they saw what it might have been, but never would be.

The man bent forward.

And the angel said, "What is it?"

He answered, "It is *I*! it is myself!" And he went forward as if he would have lain his heart against it; but the angel held him back and covered his eyes.

Now God had given power to the angel further to unclothe that soul, to take from it all those outward attributes of time and place and circumstance whereby the individ-

ual life is marked off from the life of the whole.

Again the angel uncovered the man's eyes, and he looked. He saw before him that which in its tiny drop reflects the whole universe; he saw that which marks within itself the step of the furthest star, and tells how the crystal grows under ground where no eye has seen it; that which is where the germ in the egg stirs; which moves the out-stretched fingers of the little new-born babe, and keeps the leaves of the trees pointing upward; which moves where the jelly-fish sail alone on the sunny seas, and is where the lichens form on the mountain's rocks.

And the man looked.

And the angel touched him.

But the man bowed his head and shuddered. He whispered—"It is God!"

And the angel re-covered the man's eyes. And when he uncovered them there was one walking from them a little way off—for the angel had re-clothed the soul in its

outward form and vesture—and the man knew who it was.

And the angel said, “Do you know him?”

And the man said, “I know him,” and he looked after the figure.

And the angel said, “Have you forgiven him?”

But the man said, “*How beautiful my brother is!*”

And the angel looked into the man’s eyes, and he shaded his own face with his wing from the light. He laughed softly and went up to God.

But the men were together on earth.

I awoke.

The blue, blue sky was over my head, and the waves were breaking below on the shore. I walked through the little chapel, and I saw the Madonna in blue and red, and the Christ carrying his cross, and the Roman soldiers with the rod, and the Blessèd Bambino with its broken face; and then I walked

down the sloping road to the brick pathway. The olive trees stood up on either side of the road, their black berries and pale-green leaves stood out against the sky; and the little ice-plants hung from the crevices in the stone wall. It seemed to me as if it must have rained while I was asleep. I thought I had never seen the heavens and the earth look so beautiful before. I walked down the road. The old, old, old tiredness was gone.

Presently there came a peasant boy down the path leading his ass; she had two large panniers fastened to her sides; and they went down the road before me.

I had never seen him before; but I should have liked to walk by him and to have held his hand——only, he would not have known why.

ALASSIO, ITALY.

LIFE'S GIFTS.

I SAW a woman sleeping. In her sleep she dreamt Life stood before her, and held in each hand a gift—in the one Love, in the other Freedom. And she said to the woman, “Choose !”

And the woman waited long : and she said, “Freedom !”

And Lifesaid, “Thou hast well chosen. If thou hadst said, ‘Love,’ I would have given thee that thou didst ask for ; and I would have gone from thee, and returned to thee no more. Now, the day will come when I shall return. In that day I shall bear both gifts in one hand.”

I heard the woman laugh in her sleep.

LONDON.

THE ARTIST'S SECRET.

THERE was an artist once, and he painted a picture. Other artists had colors richer and rarer, and painted more notable pictures. He painted his with one color, there was a wonderful red glow on it; and the people went up and down, saying, "We like the picture, we like the glow."

The other artists came and said, "Where does he get his color from?" They asked him; and he smiled and said, "I cannot tell you;" and worked on with his head bent low.

And one went to the far East and bought costly pigments, and made a rare color and painted, but after a time the picture faded. Another read in the old books, and made a color rich and rare, but when he had put it on the picture it was dead.

But the artist painted on. Always the work got redder and redder, and the artist grew whiter and whiter. At last one day they found him dead before his picture, and they took him up to bury him. The other men looked about in all the pots and crucibles, but they found nothing they had not.

And when they undressed him to put his grave-clothes on him, they found above his left breast the mark of a wound—it was an old, old wound, that must have been there all his life, for the edges were old and hardened; but Death, who seals all things, had drawn the edges together, and closed it up.

And they buried him. And still the people went about saying, “Where did he find his color from?”

And it came to pass that after a while the artist was forgotten—but the work lived.

ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.

"I THOUGHT I STOOD."

I.

I THOUGHT I stood in Heaven before God's throne, and God asked me what I had come for. I said I had come to arraign my brother, Man.

God said, "What has he done?"

I said, "He has taken my sister, Woman, and has stricken her, and wounded her, and thrust her out into the streets; she lies there prostrate. His hands are red with blood. I am here to arraign him; that the kingdom be taken from him, because he is not worthy, and given unto me. My hands are pure."

I showed them.

God said, "Thy hands are pure. Lift up thy robe."

I raised it; my feet were red, blood-red, as if I had trodden in wine.

God said, "How is this?"

I said, "Dear Lord, the streets on earth are full of mire. If I should walk straight on in them my outer robe might be bespotted, you see how white it is! Therefore I pick my way."

God said, "*On what?*"

I was silent, and I let my robe fall. I wrapped my mantle about my head. I went out softly. I was afraid that the angels would see me.

II.

Once more I stood at the gate of Heaven, I and another. We held fast by one another; we were very tired. We looked up at the great gates; the angels opened them, and we went in. The mud was on our garments. We walked across the marble floor, and up to the great throne. Then the angels divided us. Her, they set upon the top step,

but me, upon the bottom; for, they said "Last time this woman came here she left red foot-marks on the floor; we had to wash them out with our tears. Let her not go up."

Then she, with whom I came, looked back, and stretched out her hand to me; and I went and stood beside her. And the angels, they, the shining ones who never sinned and never suffered, walked by us to and fro and up and down; I think we should have felt a little lonely there if it had not been for one another, the angels were so bright.

God asked me what I had come for; and I drew my sister forward a little that he might see her.

God said, "How is it you are here together to-day?"

I said, "She was upon the ground in the street, and they passed over her; I lay down by her, and she put her arms around my neck, and so I lifted her, and we two rose together."

God said, "Whom are you now come to accuse before me?"

I said, "We are come to accuse no man."

And God bent, and said, "My children—what is it that ye seek?"

And she beside me drew my hand that I should speak for both.

I said, "We have come to ask that thou shouldst speak to Man, our brother, and give us a message for him that he might understand, and that he might——"

God said, "Go, take the message down to him!"

I said, "But what *is* the message?"

God said, "Upon your hearts it is written; take it down to him."

And we turned to go; the angels went with us to the door. They looked at us.

And one said—"Ai! but their dresses are beautiful!"

And the other said, "I thought it was mire when they came in, but see, it is all golden!"

But another said, "Hush, it is the light
from their faces!"

And we went down to him.

ALASSIO, ITALY.

THE SUNLIGHT LAY ACROSS MY BED,—

IN the dark one night I lay upon my bed. I heard the policeman's feet beat on the pavement; I heard the wheels of carriages roll home from houses of entertainment; I heard a woman's laugh below my window—and then I fell asleep. And in the dark I dreamt a dream. I dreamt God took my soul to Hell.

Hell was a fair place; the water of the lake was blue.

I said to God, "I like this place."

God said, "Ay, dost thou!"

Birds sang, turf came to the water-edge, and trees grew from it. Away off among the trees I saw beautiful women walking. Their clothes were of many delicate colors and clung to them, and they were tall and

graceful, and had yellow hair. Their robes trailed over the grass. They glided in and out among the trees, and over their heads hung yellow fruit like large pears of melted gold.

I said, "It is very fair ; I would go up and taste the——"

God said, "Wait."

And after a while I noticed a very fair woman pass ; she looked this way and that, and drew down a branch, and it seemed she kissed the fruit upon it softly, and went on her way, and her dress made no rustle as she passed over the grass. And when I saw her no more, from among the stems came another woman fair as she had been, in a delicate tinted robe ; she looked this way and that. When she saw no one there she drew down the fruit, and when she had looked over it to find a place, she put her mouth to it softly, and went away. And I saw other and other women come, making no noise, and they glided away also over the grass.

And I said to God, "What are they doing?"

God said, "They are poisoning."

And I said, "How?"

God said, "They touch it with their lips; when they have made a tiny wound in it with their fore-teeth they set in it that which is under their tongues; they close it with their lip—that no man may see the place, and pass on."

I said to God, "Why do they do it?"

God said, "That another may not eat."

I said to God, "But if they poison all, then none dare eat; what do they gain?"

God said, "Nothing."

I said, "Are they not afraid they themselves may bite where another has bitten?"

God said, "They are afraid. In Hell all men fear."

He called me further. And the water of the lake seemed less blue.

Then, to the right among the trees were men working. And I said to God, "I should

like to go and work with them. Hell must be a very fruitful place, the grass is so green."

God said, "Nothing grows in the garden they are making."

We stood looking; and I saw them working among the bushes, digging holes, but in them they set nothing; and when they had covered them with sticks and earth each went a way off and sat behind the bushes watching; and I noticed that as each walked he set his foot down carefully, looking where he trod. I said to God, "What are they doing?"

God said, "Making pitfalls into which their fellows may sink."

I said to God, "Why do they do it?"

God said, "Because each thinks that when his brother falls he will rise."

I said to God, "How will he rise?"

God said, "He will not rise."

And I saw their eyes gleam from behind the bushes.

I said to God, "Are these men sane?"

God said, "They are not sane; there is no sane man in Hell."

And he told me to come further.

And I looked where I trod.

And we came where Hell opened into a plain, and a great house stood there. Marble pillars upheld the roof, and white marble steps led up to it. The wind of heaven blew through it. Only at the back hung a thick curtain. Fair men and women there feasted at long tables. They danced, and I saw the robes of women flutter in the air and heard the laugh of strong men. What they feasted with was wine; they drew it from large jars which stood somewhat in the background, and I saw the wine sparkle as they drew it.

And I said to God, "I should like to go up and drink." And God said, "Wait." And I saw men coming into the banquet-house; they came in from the back and lifted the corner of the curtain at the sides

and crept in quickly; and they let the curtain fall behind them; they bore great jars they could hardly carry. And the men and women crowded round them, and the newcomers opened their jars and gave them of the wine to drink; and I saw that the women drank even more greedily than the men. And when others had well drunken they set the jars among the old ones beside the wall, and took their places at the table. And I saw that some of the jars were very old and mildewed and dusty, but others had still drops of new must on them and shone from the furnace.

And I said to God, "What is that?" For amid the sound of the singing, and over the dancing of feet, and over the laughing across the wine-cups, I heard a cry.

And God said, "Stand a way off."

And he took me where I saw both sides of the curtain. Behind the house was the wine-press where the wine was made. I saw the grapes crushed, and I heard them

cry. I said, "Do not they on the other side hear it?"

God said, "The curtain is thick; they are feasting."

And I said, "But the men who came in last. They saw?"

God said, "They let the curtain fall behind them—and they forgot!"

I said, "How came they by their jars of wine?"

God said, "In the treading of the press these are they who came to the top; they have climbed out over the edge and filled their jars from below, and have gone into the house."

And I said, "And if they had fallen as they climbed?"

God said, "They had been wine."

I stood a way off watching in the sunshine, and I shivered.

God lay in the sunshine watching too.

Then there rose one among the feasters, who said, "My brethren, let us pray!"

And all the men and women rose: and strong men bowed their heads, and mothers folded their little children's hands together, and turned their faces upward, to the roof. And he who first had risen stood at the table head and stretched out both his hands, and his beard was long and white, and his sleeves and his beard had been dipped in wine; and because the sleeves were wide and full they held much wine, and it dropped down upon the floor.

And he cried, "My brothers and my sisters, let us pray."

And all the men and women answered, "Let us pray."

He cried, "For this fair banquet-house we thank thee, Lord."

And all the men and women said, "We thank thee, Lord."

"Thine is this house, dear Lord."

"Thine is this house."

"For us hast thou made it."

"For us."

“ Oh, fill our jars with wine, dear Lord.”

“ Our jars with wine.”

“ Give peace and plenty in our time, dear Lord.”

“ Peace and plenty in our time.”—— I said to God, “ Whom is it they are talking to ? ” God said, “ Do *I* know whom they speak of ? ” And I saw they were looking up at the roof ; but out in the sunshine, God lay.

“ ——dear Lord ! ”

“ Dear Lord.”

“ Our children’s children, Lord, shall rise and call thee blessed.”

“ Our children’s children, Lord.”—— I said to God, “ The grapes are crying ! ” God said, “ Still ! *I* hear them ”—— “ shall call thee blessed.”

“ Shall call thee blessed.”

“ Pour forth more wine upon us, Lord.”

“ More wine.”

“ More wine.”

“ More wine ! ”

“ Wine ! ! ”

“ Wine!! ”

“ Wine!!! ”

“ Dear Lord! ”

Then men and women sat down and the feast went on. And mothers poured out wine and fed their little children with it, and men held up the cup to women's lips and cried, “ Beloved ! drink,” and women filled their lovers' flagons and held them up; and yet the feast went on.

And after a while I looked, and I saw the curtain that hung behind the house moving.

I said to God, “ Is it a wind ? ”

God said, “ A wind.”

And it seemed to me, that against the curtain I saw pressed the forms of men and women. And after a while the feasters saw it move, and they whispered, one to another. Then some rose and gathered the most worn-out cups, and into them they put what was left at the bottom of other vessels. Mothers whispered to their children, “ Do not drink all, save a little drop when you have drunk.”

And when they had collected all the dregs they slipped the cups out under the bottom of the curtain without lifting it. After a while the curtain left off moving.

I said to God, "How is it so quiet?"

He said, "They have gone away to drink it."

I said, "*They* drink it—*their own*!"

God said, "It comes from this side of the curtain, and they are very thirsty."

Then the feast went on, and after a while I saw a small, white hand slipped in below the curtain's edge along the floor; and it motioned toward the wine jars.

And I said to God, "Why is that hand so bloodless?"

And God said, "It is a wine-pressed hand."

And men saw it and started to their feet; and women cried, and ran to the great wine jars, and threw their arms around them, and cried, "Ours, our own, our beloved!" and twined their long hair about them.

I said to God, "Why are they frightened of that one small hand?"

God answered, "Because it is so white."

And men ran in a great company toward the curtain, and struggled there. I heard them strike upon the floor. And when they moved away the curtain hung smooth and still; and there was a small stain upon the floor.

I said to God, "Why do they not wash it out?"

God said, "They cannot."

And they took small stones and put them down along the edge of the curtain to keep it down. Then the men and women sat down again at the tables.

And I said to God, "Will those stones keep it down?"

God said, "What think you?"

I said, "If the wind blew——"

God said, "If the wind blew?"

And the feast went on.

And suddenly I cried to God, "If one

should rise among them, even of themselves, and start up from the table and should cast away his cup, and cry, 'My brothers and sisters, stay! what is it that we drink?'—and with his sword should cut in two the curtain, and holding wide the fragments, cry, 'Brothers, sisters, see! it is not wine, not wine! not wine! My brothers, oh, my sisters—!' and he should overturn the——”

God said, “Be still!—, see there.”

I looked : before the banquet-house, among the grass, I saw a row of mounds, flowers covered them, and gilded marble stood at their heads. I asked God what they were.

He answered, “They are the graves of those who rose up at the feast and cried.”

And I asked God how they came there.

He said, “The men of the banquet-house rose and cast them down backward.”

I said, “Who buried them?”

God said, “The men who cast them down.”

I said, "How came it that they threw them down, and then set marble over them?"

God said, "Because the bones cried out, they covered them."

And among the grass and weeds I saw an unburied body lying; and I asked God why it was.

God said, "Because it was thrown down only yesterday. In a little while, when the flesh shall have fallen from its bones, they will bury it also, and plant flowers over it."

And still the feast went on.

Men and women sat at the tables quaffing great bowls. Some rose, and threw their arms about each other, and danced and sang. They pledged each other in the wine, and kissed each other's blood-red lips.

Higher and higher grew the revels.

Men, when they had drunk till they could no longer, threw what was left in their glasses up to the roof, and let it fall back in cascades. Women dyed their children's gar-

ments in the wine, and fed them on it till their tiny mouths were red. Sometimes, as the dancers whirled, they overturned a vessel, and their garments were bespattered. Children sat upon the floor with great bowls of wine, and swam rose leaves on it for boats. They put their hands in the wine and blew large red bubbles.

And higher and higher grew the revels, and wilder the dancing, and louder and louder the singing. But here and there among the revelers were those who did not revel. I saw that at the tables, here and there, were men who sat with their elbows on the board and hands shading their eyes; they looked into the wine-cup beneath them, and did not drink. And when one touched them lightly on the shoulder, bidding them to rise and dance and sing, they started, and they looked down, and sat there watching the wine in the cup, but they did not move.

And here and there I saw a woman sit apart. The others danced and sang and fed

their children, but she sat silent with her head aside as though she listened. Her little children plucked her gown; she did not see them; she was listening to some sound, but she did not stir.

The revels grew higher. Men drank till they could drink no longer, and lay their heads upon the table sleeping heavily. Women who could dance no more leaned back on the benches with their heads against their lovers' shoulders. Little children, sick with wine, lay down upon the edges of their mothers' robes. Sometimes a man rose suddenly and as he staggered struck the tables and overthrew the benches; some leaned upon the balustrades sick unto death. Here and there one rose who staggered to the wine jars and lay down beside them. He turned the wine tap, but sleep overcame him as he lay there, and the wine ran out.

Slowly the thin, red stream ran across the white marbled floor; it reached the stone steps; slowly, slowly, slowly it trickled

down, from step to step, from step to step; then it sank into the earth. A thin white smoke rose up from it.

I was silent; I could not breathe; but God called me to come further.

And after I had traveled for a while I came where on seven hills lay the ruins of a mighty banquet-house larger and stronger than the one which I had seen standing.

I said to God, "What did the men who built it here?"

God said, "They feasted."

I said, "On what?"

God said, "On wine."

And I looked; and it seemed to me that behind the ruins lay still a large circular hollow within the earth where a foot of the wine-press had stood.

I said to God, "How came it that this large house fell?"

God said, "Because the earth was sodden."

He called me to come further.

And at last we came upon a hill where

blue waters played, and white marble lay upon the earth. I said to God, "What was here once?"

God said, "A pleasure-house."

I looked, and at my feet great pillars lay. I cried aloud for joy to God, "The marble blossoms!"

God said, "Ay, 'twas a fairy house. There has not been one like to it, nor ever shall be. The pillars and the porticoes blossomed; and the wine-cups were as gathered flowers: on this side all the curtain was brodered with fair designs, t' e stitching was of gold."

I said to God, "How came it that it fell?"

God said, "On the side of the wine-press it was dark."

And as we traveled, we came where lay a mighty ridge of sand, and a dark river ran there; and there rose two vast mounds.

I said to God, "They are very mighty."

God said, "Ay, exceeding great."

And I listened.

God asked me what I was listening to.

And I said, "A sound of weeping, and I hear the sound of strokes, but I cannot tell whence it comes."

God said, "It is the echo of the wine-press lingering still among the coping-stones upon the mounds. A banquet-house stood here."

And he called me to come further.

Upon a barren hillside, where the soil was arid, God called me to stand still. And I looked around.

God said, "There was a feasting-house here once upon a time."

I said to God, "I see no mark of any!"

God said, "There was not left one stone upon another that has not been thrown down." And I looked round; and on the hillside was a lonely grave.

I said to God, "Who lies there?"

He said, "A vine truss, bruised in the wine-press!"

And at the head of the grave stood a cross, and on its foot lay a crown of thorns.

And as I turned to go, I looked backward.

The wine-press and the banquet-house were gone; but the grave yet stood.

And when I came to the edge of a long ridge there opened out before me a wide plain of sand. And when I looked downward I saw great stones lie shattered; and the desert sand had half covered them over.

I said to God, "There is writing on them, but I cannot read it."

And God blew aside the desert sand, and I read the writing: "Weigh'd in the balance, and found—" but the last word was wanting.

And I said to God, "It was a banquet-house?"

God said, "Ay, a banquet-house."

I said, "There was a wine-press here?"

God said, "There was a wine-press."

I asked no further question. I was very weary; I shaded my eyes with my hand, and looked through the pink evening light.

Far off, across the sand, I saw two figures

standing. With wings unfolded high above their heads, and stern faces set, neither man nor beast, they looked out across the desert sand, watching, watching, watching! I did not ask God what they were, for I knew what the answer would be.

And, further and yet further, in the evening light, I looked with my shaded eyes.

Far off, where the sands were thick and heavy, I saw a solitary pillar standing; the crown had fallen, and the sand had buried it. On the broken pillar sat a gray owl of the desert, with folded wings; and in the evening light I saw the desert fox creep past it, trailing his brush across the sand.

Further, yet further, as I looked across the desert, I saw the sand gathered into heaps as though it covered something.

I cried to God, "Oh, I am so weary."

God said, "You have seen only one half of Hell."

I said, "I cannot see more, I am afraid of

Hell. In my own narrow little path I dare not walk, because I think that one has dug a pitfall for me; and if I put my hand to take a fruit I draw it back again because I think it has been kissed already. If I look out across the plains, the mounds are burial heaps; and when I pass among the stones I hear them crying aloud. When I see men dancing I hear the time beaten in with sobs; and their wine is living! Oh, I cannot bear Hell!"

God said, "Where will you go?"

I said "To the earth from which I came; it was better there."

And God laughed at me; and I wondered why he laughed.

God said, "Come, and I will show you Heaven."

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And partly I awoke. It was still and dark; the sound of the carriages had died in the street; the woman who laughed was gone; and the policeman's tread was heard

no more. In the dark it seemed as if a great hand lay upon my heart, and crushed it. I tried to breathe and tossed from side to side; and then again I fell asleep, and dreamed.

God took me to the edge of that world. It ended. I looked down. The gulf, it seemed to me, was fathomless; and then I saw two bridges crossing it that both sloped upward.

I said to God, "Is there no other way by which men cross it?"

God said, "One; it rises far from here and slopes straight upward."

I asked God what the bridges' names were.

God said, "What matter for the names? Call them the Good, the True, the Beautiful, if you will—you will yet not understand them."

I asked God how it was I could not see the third.

God said, "It is seen only by those who climb it."

I said, "Do they all lead to one Heaven?"

God said, "All Heaven is one: nevertheless some parts are higher than others; those who reach the higher may always go down to rest in the lower; but those in the lower may not have strength to climb to the higher; nevertheless the light is all one."

And I saw over the bridge nearest me, which was wider than the other, countless footmarks go. I asked God why so many went over it.

God said, "It slopes less deeply, and leads to the first heaven."

And I saw that some of the footmarks were of feet returning. I asked God how it was.

He said, "No man who has once entered Heaven ever leaves it; but some, when they have gone half-way, turn back, because they are afraid there is no land beyond."

I said, "Has none ever returned?"

God said, "No; once in Heaven always in Heaven."

And God took me over. And when we came to one of the great doors—for Heaven has more doors than one, and they are all open—the posts rose up so high on either side I could not see the top, nor indeed if there were any.

And it seemed to me so wide that all Hell could go in through it.

I said to God, “Which is the larger, Heaven or Hell?”

God said, “Hell is as wide, but Heaven is deeper. All Hell could be engulfed in Heaven, but all Heaven could not be engulfed in Hell.”

And we entered. It was a still great land. The mountains rose on every hand, and there was a pale clear light; and I saw it came from the rocks and stones. I asked God how it was.

But God did not answer me.

I looked and wondered, for I had thought Heaven would be otherwise. And after a while it began to grow brighter, as if the

day were breaking, and I asked God if the sun were not going to rise.

God said, "No; we are coming to where the people are."

And as we went on it grew brighter and brighter, till it was burning day; and on the rocks were flowers blooming, and trees blossomed at the roadside; and streams of water ran everywhere, and I heard the birds singing; I asked God where they were.

God said, "It is the people calling to one another."

And when we came nearer I saw them walking, and they shone as they walked. I asked God how it was they wore no covering.

God said, "Because all their body gives the light; they dare not cover any part."

And I asked God what they were doing.

God said, "Shining on the plants, that they may grow."

And I saw that some were working in companies, and some alone, but most were

in twos, sometimes two men and sometimes two women ; but generally there was one man and one woman ; and I asked God how it was.

God said, " When one man and one woman shine together, it makes the most perfect light. Many plants need that for their growing. Nevertheless, there are more kinds of plants in Heaven than one, and they need many kinds of light."

And one from among the people came running toward me ; and when he came near it seemed to me that he and I had played together when we were little children, and that we had been born on the same day. And I told God what I felt. God said, " All men feel so in Heaven when another comes toward them."

And he who ran toward me held my hand, and led me through the bright lights. And when we came among the trees he sang aloud, and his companion answered, and it was a woman, and he showed me to her.

She said, "He must have water;" and she took some in her hands, and fed me (I had been afraid to drink of the water in Hell), and they gathered fruit for me, and gave it me to eat. They said, "We shone long to make it ripen," and they laughed together as they saw me eat it.

The man said, "He is very weary; he must sleep" (for I had not dared to sleep in Hell), and he laid my head on his companion's knee and spread her hair out over me. I slept, and all the while in my sleep I thought I heard the birds calling across me. And when I woke it was like early morning, with the dew on everything.

And the man took my hand and led me to a hidden spot among the rocks. The ground was very hard, but out of it were sprouting tiny plants, and there was a little stream running. He said, "This is a garden we are making, no one else knows of it. We shine here every day; see, the ground has cracked with our shining, and this little

stream is bursting out. See, the flowers are growing."

And he climbed on the rocks and picked from above two little flowers with dew on them, and gave them to me. And I took one in each hand; my hands shone as I held them. He said, "This garden is for all when it is finished." And he went away to his companion, and I went out into the great pathway.

And as I walked in the light I heard a loud sound of much singing. And when I came nearer I saw one with closed eyes, singing, and his fellows were standing round him; and the light on the closed eyes was brighter than anything I had seen in Heaven. I asked one who it was. And he said "Hush! Our singing bird."

And I asked why the eyes shone so.

And he said, "They cannot see, and we have kissed them till they shone so."

And the people gathered closer round him.

And when I went a little further I saw a crowd crossing among the trees of light with great laughter. When they came close I saw they carried one without hands or feet. And a light came from the maimed limbs so bright that I could not look at them.

And I said to one, "What is it?"

He answered, "This is our brother who once fell and lost his hands and feet, and since then he cannot help himself; but we have touched the maimed stumps so often that now they shine brighter than anything in Heaven. We pass him on that he may shine on things that need much heat. No one is allowed to keep him long, he belongs to all;" and they went on among the trees.

I said to God, "This is a strange land. I had thought blindness and maimedness were great evils. Here men make them to a rejoicing."

God said, "Didst thou then think that love had *need* of eyes and hands!"

And I walked down the shining way with palms on either hand. I said to God, "Ever since I was a little child and sat alone and cried, I have dreamed of this land, and now I will not go away again. I will stay here and shine." And I began to take off my garments, that I might shine as others in that land; but when I looked down I saw my body gave no light. I said to God, "How is it?"

God said, "Is there no dark blood in your heart; is it bitter against none?"

And I said, "Yes——;" and I thought—"Now is the time when I will tell God, that which I have been, meaning to tell him all along, how badly my fellow-men have treated me. How they have misunderstood me. How I have intended to be magnanimous and generous to them, and they——" And I began to tell God; but when I looked down all the flowers were withering under my breath, and I was silent.

And God called me to come up higher,

and I gathered my mantle about me and followed him.

And the rocks grew higher and steeper on every side; and we came at last to a place where a great mountain rose, whose top was lost in the clouds. And on its side I saw men working; and they picked at the earth with huge picks; and I saw that they labored mightily. And some labored in companies, but most labored singly. And I saw the drops of sweat fall from their foreheads, and the muscles of their arms stand out with labor. And I said, "I had not thought in heaven to see men labor so!" And I thought of the garden where men sang and loved, and I wondered that any should choose to labor on that bare mountain-side. And I saw upon the foreheads of the men as they worked a light, and the drops which fell from them as they worked had light.

And I asked God what they were seeking for.

And God touched my eyes, and I saw that what they found were small stones, which had been too bright for me to see before; and I saw that the light of the stones and the light on the men's foreheads was the same. And I saw that when one found a stone he passed it on to his fellow, and he to another, and he to another. No man kept the stone he found. And at times they gathered in great company about when a large stone was found, and raised a great shout so that the sky rang; then they worked on again.

And I asked God what they did with the stones they found at last. Then God touched my eyes again to make them stronger; and I looked, and at my very feet was a mighty crown. The light streamed out from it.

God said, "Each stone as they find it is set here."

And the crown was wrought according to a marvelous pattern; one pattern

ran through all, yet each part was different.

I said to God, "How does each man know where to set his stone, so that the pattern is worked out?"

God said, "Because in the light his forehead sheds each man sees faintly outlined that full crown."

And I said, "But how is it that each stone is joined along its edges to its fellows, so that there is no seam anywhere?"

God said, "The stones are alive; they grow."

And I said, "But what does each man gain by his working?"

God said, "He sees his outline filled."

I said, "But those stones which are last set cover those which were first; and those will again be covered by those which come later."

God said, "They are covered, but not hid. The light is the light of all. Without the first, no last."

And I said to God, "When will this crown be ended?"

And God said, "Look up!"

I looked up; and I saw the mountain tower above me, but its summit I could not see; it was lost in the clouds.

God said no more.

And I looked at the crown; then a longing seized me. Like the passion of a mother for the child whom death has taken; like the yearning of a friend for the friend whom life has buried; like the hunger of dying eyes for a life that is slipping; like the thirst of a soul for love at its first spring waking, so, but fiercer was the longing in me.

I cried to God, "I too will work here; I too will set stones in the wonderful pattern; it shall grow beneath *my* hand. And if it be that, laboring here for years, I should not find one stone, at least I will be with the men that labor here. I shall hear their shout of joy when each stone is found; I shall join in their triumph, I shall shout

among them ; I shall see the crown grow." So great was my longing as I looked at the crown, I thought a faint light fell from my forehead also.

God said, "Do you not hear the singing in the gardens?"

I said, "No, I hear nothing; I see only the crown." And I was dumb with longing; I forgot all the flowers of the lower Heaven and the singing there. And I ran forward, and threw my mantle on the earth and bent to seize one of the mighty tools which lay there. I could not lift it from the earth.

God said, "Where hast *thou* earned the strength to raise it? Take up thy mantle."

And I took up my mantle and followed where God called me; but I looked back, and I saw the crown burning, my crown that I had loved.

Higher and higher we climbed, and the air grew thinner. Not a tree or plant was on the bare rocks, and the stillness was

unbroken. My breath came hard and quick, and the blood crept within my finger-tips. I said to God, "Is this Heaven?"

God said, "Yes ; it is the highest."

And still we climbed. I said to God, "I cannot breathe so high."

God said, "Because the air is pure?"

And my head grew dizzy, and as I climbed the blood burst from my finger-tips.

Then we came out upon a lonely mountain-top.

No living being moved there ; but far off on a solitary peak I saw a lonely figure standing. Whether it were man or woman I could not tell ; for partly it seemed the figure of a woman, but its limbs were the mighty limbs of a man. I asked God whether it was man or woman.

God said, "In the least Heaven sex reigns supreme ; in the higher it is not noticed ; but in the highest it does not exist."

And I saw the figure bend over its work,

and labor mightily, but what it labored at I could not see.

I said to God, "How came it here?"

God said, "By a bloody stair. Step by step it mounted from the lowest Hell, and day by day as Hell grew farther and Heaven no nearer, it hung alone between two worlds. Hour by hour in that bitter struggle its limbs grew larger, till there fell from it rag by rag the garments which it started with. Drops fell from its eyes as it strained them; each step it climbed was wet with blood. Then it came out here."

And I thought of the garden where men sang with their arms round one another, and the mountain-side where they worked in company. And I shuddered.

And I said, "Is it not terribly alone here?"

God said, "It is never alone!"

I said, "What has it for all its labor? I see nothing return to it."

Then God touched my eyes, and I saw stretched out beneath us the plains of

Heaven and Hell, and all that was within them.

God said, "From that lone height on which he stands, all things are open. To him is clear the shining in the garden, he sees the flower break forth and the streams sparkle; no shout is raised upon the mountain-side but his ear may hear it. He sees the crown grow and the light shoot from it. All Hell is open to him. He sees the paths mount upward. To him, Hell is the seed ground from which Heaven springs. He sees the sap ascending.'

And I saw the figure bend over its work, and the light from its face fell upon it.

And I said to God, "What is it making?"

And God said, "Music!"

And he touched my ears, and I heard it.

And after a long while I whispered to God, "This is Heaven."

And God asked me why I was crying. But I could not answer for joy.

And the face turned from its work, and

the light fell upon me. Then it grew so bright I could not see things separately; and which were God, or the man, or I, I could not tell; we were all blended. I cried to God, "Where are you?" but there was no answer, only music and light.

Afterward, when it had grown so dark again that I could see things separately, I found that I was standing there wrapped tight in my little old, brown, earthly cloak, and God and the man were separated from each other, and from me.

I did not dare say I would go and make music beside the man. I knew I could not reach even to his knee, nor move the instrument he played. But I thought I would stand there on my little peak and sing an accompaniment to that great music. And I tried; but my voice failed. It piped and quavered. I could not sing that tune. I was silent.

Then God pointed to me, that I should go out of Heaven.

And I cried to God, "Oh, let me stay here! If indeed it be, as I know it is, that I am not great enough to sing upon the mountain, nor strong enough to labor on its side, nor bright enough to shine and love within the garden, at least let me go down to the great gateway; humbly I will kneel there sweeping; and, as the saved pass in, I will see the light upon their faces. I shall hear the singing in the garden, and the shout upon the hillside——"

God said, "It may not be;" he pointed.

And I cried, "If I may not stay in Heaven then let me go down to Hell, and I will grasp the hands of men and women there; and slowly, holding one another's hands, we will work our way upward."

Still God pointed.

And I threw myself upon the earth and cried, "Earth is so small, so mean! It is not meet a soul should see Heaven and be cast out again!"

And God laid his hand on me, and said,

"Go back to earth: *that which you seek is there.*"

I awoke: it was morning. The silence and darkness of the night were gone. Through my narrow attic window I saw the light of another day. I closed my eyes and turned toward the wall: I could not look upon the dull gray world.

In the streets below, men and women streamed past by hundreds; I heard the beat of their feet on the pavement. Men on their way to business; servants on errands; boys hurrying to school; weary professors pacing slowly the old street; prostitutes, men and women, dragging their feet wearily after last night's debauch; artists' quick, impatient footsteps; tradesmen's orders; children to seek for bread. I heard the stream beat by. And at the alley-mouth, at the street corner, a broken barrel-organ was playing; sometimes it quavered and almost stopped, then went on again, like a broken human voice.

I listened : my heart scarcely moved ; it was as cold as lead. I could not bear the long day before me ; and I tried to sleep again ; yet still I heard the feet upon the pavement. And suddenly I heard them cry loud as they beat, " We are seeking !—we are seeking !—we are seeking ! " and the broken barrel-organ at the street corner sobbed, " The Beautiful !—the Beautiful !—the Beautiful ! " And my heart, which had been dead, cried out with every throb, " Love !—Truth !—the Beautiful !—the Beautiful ! " It was the music I had heard in Heaven that I could not sing there.

And fully I awoke.

Upon the faded quilt, across my bed, a lowly, low streak of pale London sunlight all wowing. It fell through my narrow attic window.

I laughed. I rose.

I was glad the long day was before me.

PARIS AND LONDON.

THROUGH THE GATES OF GOLD

BY

MABEL COLLINS



THIS VOLUME

IS DUTIFULLY INSCRIBED TO

**THE SOVEREIGN, GRAND MASTER, AND
COMPANIONS.**

OF

The Most Exalted Order of the Star of India

BY

THE AUTHOR.

Once, as I sat alone writing, a mysterious Visitor entered my study, unannounced, and stood beside me. I forgot to ask who he was or why he entered so unceremoniously, for he began to tell me of the Gates of Gold. He spoke from knowledge, and from the fire of his speech I caught faith. I have written down his words ; but, alas, I cannot hope that the fire shall burn so brightly in my writing as in his speech.

M. C.



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THROUGH THE GATES OF GOLD:

A FRAGMENT OF THOUGHT

PROLOGUE.

EVERY man has a philosophy of life of his own, except the true philosopher. The most ignorant boor has some conception of his object in living, and definite ideas as to the easiest and wisest way of attaining that object. The man of the world is often, unconsciously to himself, a philosopher of the first rank. He deals with his life on principles of the clearest character, and refuses to let his position be shattered by chance disaster. The man of thought and imagination has less certainty, and finds himself continually unable to formulate his ideas on that subject most profoundly interesting to human nature,—

human life itself. The true philosopher is the one who would lay no claim to the name whatever, who has discovered that the mystery of life is unapproachable by ordinary thought, just as the true scientist confesses his complete ignorance of the principles which lie behind science.

Whether there is any mode of thought or any effort of the mind which will enable a man to grasp the great principles that evidently exist as causes in human life, is a question no ordinary thinker can determine. Yet the dim consciousness that there is cause behind the effects we see, that there is order ruling the chaos and sublime harmony pervading the discords, haunts the eager souls of the earth, and makes them long for vision of the unseen and knowledge of the unknowable.

Why long and look for that which is beyond all hope until the inner eyes are opened? Why not piece together the fragments that we have at hand, and see whether from them some shape cannot be given to the vast puzzle?

CHAPTER I.

THE SEARCH FOR PLEASURE.

I.

WE are all acquainted with that stern thing called misery, which pursues man, and strangely enough, as it seems at first, pursues him with no vague or uncertain method, but with a positive and unbroken pertinacity. Its presence is not absolutely continuous, else man must cease to live ; but its pertinacity is without any break. There is always the shadowy form of despair standing behind man ready to touch him with its terrible finger if for too long he finds himself content. What has given this ghastly shape the right to haunt us from the hour we are born until the hour

we die ? What has given it the right to stand always at our door, keeping that door ajar with its impalpable yet plainly horrible hand, ready to enter at the moment it sees fit ? The greatest philosopher that ever lived succumbs before it at last ; and he only is a philosopher, in any sane sense, who recognizes the fact that it is irresistible, and knows that like all other men he must suffer soon or late. It is part of the heritage of men, this pain and distress ; and he who determines that nothing shall make him suffer, does but cloak himself in a profound and chilly selfishness. This cloak may protect him from pain ; it will also separate him from pleasure. If peace is to be found on earth, or any joy in life, it cannot be by closing up the gates of feeling, which admit us to the loftiest and most vivid part of our existence. Sensation, as we obtain it through the physical body, affords us all that induces us to live in that shape. It is inconceivable that any man would care to take the trouble of breathing, unless the act brought with it a sense of satisfaction.

So it is with every deed of every instant of our life. We live because it is pleasant even to have the sensation of pain. It is sensation we desire, else we would with one accord taste of the deep waters of oblivion, and the human race would become extinct. If this is the case in the physical life, it is evidently the case with the life of the emotions,—the imagination, the sensibilities, all those fine and delicate formations which, with the marvelous recording mechanism of the brain, make up the inner or subtile man. Sensation is that which makes their pleasure; an infinite series of sensations is life to them. Destroy the sensation which makes them wish to persevere in the experiment of living, and there is nothing left. Therefore the man who attempts to obliterate the sense of pain, and who proposes to maintain an equal state whether he is pleased or hurt, strikes at the very root of life, and destroys the object of his own existence. And that must apply, so far as our present reasoning or intuitive powers can show us, to every

state, even to that of the Oriental's longed for Nirvana. This condition can only be one of infinitely subtler and more exquisite sensation, if it is a state at all, and not annihilation ; and according to the experience of life from which we are at present able to judge, increased subtlety of sensation means increased vividness,—as, for instance, a man of sensibility and imagination feels more in consequence of the unfaithfulness or faithfulness of a friend than can a man of even the grossest physical nature feel through the medium of the senses. Thus it is clear that the philosopher who refuses to feel, leaves himself no place to retreat to, not even the distant and unattainable Nirvanic goal. He can only deny himself his heritage of life, which is in other words the right of sensation. If he chooses to sacrifice that which makes him man, he must be content with mere idleness of consciousness,—a condition compared to which the oyster's is a life of excitement.

But no man is able to accomplish such

a feat. The fact of his continued existence proves plainly that he still desires sensation, and desires it in such positive and active form that the desire must be gratified in physical life. It would seem more practical not to deceive one's self by the sham of stoicism, not to attempt renunciation of that with which nothing would induce one to part. Would it not be a bolder policy, a more promising mode of solving the great enigma of existence, to grasp it, to take hold firmly and to demand of it the mystery of itself? If men will but pause and consider what lessons they have learned from pleasure and pain, much might be guessed of that strange thing which causes these effects. But men are prone to turn away hastily from self-study, or from any close analysis of human nature. Yet there must be a science of life as intelligible as any of the methods of the schools. The science is unknown, it is true, and its existence is merely guessed, merely hinted at, by one or two of our more advanced thinkers. The development of a

science is only the discovery of what is already in existence; and chemistry is as magical and incredible now to the plow-boy as the science of life is to the man of ordinary perceptions. Yet there may be, and there must be, a seer who perceives the growth of the new knowledge as the earliest dabblers in the experiments of the laboratory saw the system of acknowledge now attained evolving itself out of nature for man's use and benefit.

II.

Doubtless many more would experiment in suicide, as many now do, in order to escape from the burden of life, if they could be convinced that in that manner oblivion might be found. But he who hesitates before drinking the poison from the fear of only inviting change of mode of existence, and perhaps a more active form of misery, is a man of more knowledge than the rash souls who fling themselves wildly on the

unknown, trusting to its kindliness. The waters of oblivion are something very different from the waters of death, and the human race cannot become extinct by means of death while the law of birth still operates. Man returns to physical life as the drunkard returns to the flagon of wine,—he knows not why, except that he desires the sensation produced by life as the drunkard desires the sensation produced by wine. The true waters of oblivion lie far behind our consciousness, and can only be reached by ceasing to exist in that consciousness,—by ceasing to exert the will which makes us full of senses and sensibilities.

Why does not the creature man return into that great womb of silence whence he came, and remain in peace, as the unborn child is at peace before the impetus of life has reached it? He does not do so because he hungers for pleasure and pain, joy and grief, anger and love. The unfortunate man will maintain that he has no desire for life; and yet he proves his

words false by living. None can compel him to live; the galley-slave may be chained to his oar, but his life cannot be chained to his body. The superb mechanism of the human body is as useless as an engine whose fires are not lit, if the will to live ceases,—that will which we maintain resolutely and without pause, and which enables us to perform the tasks which otherwise would fill us with dismay, as, for instance, the momentarily drawing in and giving out of the breath. Such herculean efforts as this we carry on without complaint, and indeed with pleasure, in order that we may exist in the midst of innumerable sensations.

And more; we are content, for the most part, to go on without object or aim, without any idea of a goal or understanding of which way we are going. When the man first becomes aware of this aimlessness, and is dimly conscious that he is working with great and constant efforts, and without any idea toward what end these efforts are directed, then descends on him the

misery of nineteenth-century thought. He is lost and bewildered, and without hope. He becomes skeptical, disillusioned, weary, and asks the apparently unanswerable question whether it is indeed worth while to draw his breath for such unknown and seemingly unknowable results. But are these results unknowable? At least, to ask a lesser question, is it impossible to make a guess as to the direction in which our goal lies?

III.

This question, born of sadness and weariness, which seems to us essentially part of the spirit of the nineteenth century, is in fact a question which must have been asked all through the ages. Could we go back throughout history intelligently, no doubt we should find that it came always with the hour when the flower of civilization had blown to its full, and when its petals were but slackly held together. The natural part of man has reached then

its utmost height ; he has rolled the stone up the Hill of Difficulty only to watch it roll back again when the summit is reached, —as in Egypt, in Rome, in Greece. Why this useless labor? Is it not enough to produce a weariness and sickness unutterable, to be forever accomplishing a task only to see it undone again? Yet that is what man has done throughout history, so far as our limited knowledge reaches. There is one summit to which, by immense and united efforts, he attains, where there is a great and brilliant efflorescence of all the intellectual, mental and material part of his nature. The climax of sensuous perfection is reached, and then his hold weakens, his power grows less, and he falls back, through despondency and satiety, to barbarism. Why does he not stay on this hill-top and look away to the mountains beyond, and resolve to scale those greater heights? Because he is ignorant, and seeing a great glittering in the distance, drops his eyes bewildered and dazzled, and goes back for rest to the shadowy side of his familiar hill

Yet there is now and then one brave enough to gaze fixedly on this glittering, and to decipher something of the shape within it. Poets and philosophers, thinkers, and teachers,—all those who are the “elder brothers of the race,”—have beheld this sight from time to time, and some among them have recognized in the bewildering glitter the outlines of the Gates of Gold.

Those gates admit us to the sanctuary of man's own nature, to the place whence his life-power comes, and where he is priest of the shrine of life. That it is possible to enter here, to pass through those Gates, some one of two have shown us. Plato, Shakspeare, and a few other strong ones have gone through and spoken to us in veiled language on the near side of the Gates. When the strong man has crossed the threshold he speaks no more to those on the other side. And even the words he utters when he is outside are so full of mystery, so veiled and profound, that only those who follow in his steps can see the light within then.

IV.

What men desire is to ascertain how to exchange pain for pleasure ; that is, to find out in what way consciousness may be regulated in order that the sensation which is most agreeable is the one that is experienced. Whether this can be discovered by dint of human thought is at least a question worth considering.

If the mind of man is turned upon any given subject with a sufficient concentration, he obtains illumination with regard to it sooner or later. The particular individual in whom the final illumination appears is called a genius, an inventor, one inspired ; but he is only the crown of a great mental work created by unknown men about him, and receding back from him through long vistas of distance. Without them he would not have had his material to deal with. Even the poet requires innumerable poetasters to feed upon. He is the essence of the poetic power of his time, and of the times before him. It is im-

possible to separate an individual of any species from his kin.

If, therefore, instead of accepting the unknown as unknowable, men were *with one accord* to turn their thoughts towards it, those Golden Gates would not remain so inexorably shut. It does but need a strong hand to push them open. The courage to enter them is the courage to search the recesses of one's own nature without fear and without shame. In the fine part, the essence, the flavor of the man, is found the key which unlocks those great Gates. And when they open, what is it that is found?

Voices here and there in the long silence of the ages speak to answer that question. Those who have passed through have left words behind them as legacies to others of their kin. In these words we can find definite indications of what is to be looked for beyond the Gates. But only those who desire to go that way read the meaning hidden within the words. Scholars, or rather scholiasts, read the sacred books of

different nations, the poetry and the philosophy left by enlightened minds, and find in it all the merest materiality. Imagination glorifying legends of nature, or exaggerating the psychic possibilities of man, explains to them all that they find in the Bibles of humanity.

What is to be found within the words of those books is to be found in each one of us; and it is impossible to find in literature or through any channel of thought that which does not exist in the man who studies. This is of course an evident fact known to all real students. But it has to be especially remembered in reference to this profound and obscure subject, as men so readily believe that nothing can exist for others where they themselves find emptiness.

One thing is soon perceived by the man who reads: those who have gone before have not found that the Gates of Gold lead to oblivion. On the contrary, sensation becomes real for the first time when that threshold is crossed. But it is of a new

order, an order unknown to us now, and by us impossible to appreciate without at least some clew as to its character. This clew can be obtained undoubtedly by any student who cares to go through all the literature accessible to us. That mystic books and manuscripts exist, but remain inaccessible simply because there is no man ready to read the first page of any one of them, becomes the conviction of all who have studied the subject sufficiently. For there must be the continuous line all through: we see it go from dense ignorance up to intelligence and wisdom; it is only natural that it should go on to intuitive knowledge and to inspiration. Some scant fragments we have of these great gifts of man; where, then, is the whole of which they must be a part? Hidden behind the thin yet seemingly impassable veil which hides it from us as it hid all science, all art, all powers of man till he had the courage to tear away the screen. That courage comes only of conviction. When once man believes that the thing exists which he desires, he will

obtain it at any cost. The difficulty in this case lies in man's incredulity. It requires a great tide of thought and attention to set in towards the unknown region of man's nature in order that its gates may be unlocked and its glorious vistas explored.

That it is worth while to do this whatever the hazard may be, all must allow who have asked the sad question of the nineteenth century,—Is life worth living? Surely it is sufficient to spur man to new effort,—the suspicion that beyond civilization, beyond mental culture, beyond art and mechanical perfection, there is a new, another gateway, admitting to the realities of life.

V.

When it seems as if the end was reached, the goal attained, and that man has no more to do,—just then, when he appears to have no choice but between eating and drinking and living in his comfort as the beasts do in theirs, and skepticism which

is death,—then it is that in fact, if he will but look, the Golden Gates are before him. With the culture of the age within him and assimilated perfectly, so that he is himself an incarnation of it, then he is fit to attempt the great step which is absolutely possible, yet is attempted by so few even of those who are fitted for it. It is so seldom attempted, partly because of the profound difficulties which surround it, but much more because man does not realize that this is actually the direction in which pleasure and satisfaction are to be obtained.

There are certain pleasures which appeal to each individual; every man knows that in one layer or another of sensation he finds his chief delight. Naturally he turns to this systematically through life, just as the sunflower turns to the sun and the water-lily leans on the water. But he struggles throughout with an awful fact which oppresses him to the soul,—that no sooner has he obtained his pleasure than he loses it again and has once more to go in search of it. More than that; he never actually reaches it, for it eludes him at the final moment. This is because he endeav-

ors to seize that which is untouchable and satisfy his soul's hunger for sensation by contact with external objects. How can that which is external satisfy or even please the inner man,—the thing which reigns within and has no eyes for matter, no hands for touch of objects, no senses with which to apprehend that which is outside its magic walls? Those charmed barriers which surround it are limitless, for it is everywhere; it is to be discovered in all living things, and no part of the universe can be conceived of without it, if that universe is regarded as a coherent whole. And unless that point is granted at the outset it is useless to consider the subject of life at all. Life is indeed meaningless unless it is universal and coherent, and unless we maintain our existence by reason of the fact that we are part of that which is, not by reason of our own being.

This is one of the most important factors in the development of man, the recognition—profound and complete recognition—of the law of universal unity and coherence. The separation which exists between individuals, between worlds, between the different poles

of the universe and of life, the mental and physical fantasy called space, is a nightmare of the human imagination. That nightmares exist, and exist only to torment, every child knows; and what we need is the power of discrimination between the phantasmagoria of the brain, which concern ourselves only, and the phantasmagoria of daily life, in which others also are concerned. This rule applies also to the larger case. It concerns no one but ourselves that we live in a nightmare of unreal horror, and fancy ourselves alone in the universe and capable of independent action, so long as our associates are those only who are a part of the dream; but when we desire to speak with those who have tried the Golden Gates and pushed them open, then it is very necessary—in fact it is essential—to discriminate, and not bring into our life the confusions of our sleep. If we do, we are reckoned as madmen, and fall back into the darkness where there is no friend but chaos. This chaos has followed every effort of man that is written in his

tory ; after civilization has flowered, the flower falls and dies, and winter and darkness destroy it. While man refuses to make the effort of discrimination which would enable him to distinguish between the shapes of night and the active figures of day, this must inevitably happen.

But if man has the courage to resist this reactionary tendency, to stand steadily on the height he has reached and put out his foot in search of yet another step, why should he not find it? There is nothing to make one suppose the pathway to end at a certain point, except that tradition which has declared it is so, and which men have accepted and hug to themselves as a justification for their indolence.

VI.

Indolence is, in fact, the curse of man. As the Irish peasant and the cosmopolitan gypsy dwell in dirt and poverty out of sheer idleness, so does the man of the world

live contented in sensuous pleasures for the same reason. The drinking of fine wines, the tasting of delicate food, the love of bright sights and sounds, of beautiful women and admirable surroundings,—these are no better for the cultivated man, no more satisfactory as a final goal of enjoyment for him, than the coarse amusements and gratifications of the boor are for the man without cultivation. There can be no final point, for life in every form is one vast series of fine gradations ; and the man who elects to stand still at the point of culture he has reached, and to avow that he can go no further, is simply making an arbitrary statement for the excuse of his indolence. Of course there is a possibility of declaring that the gypsy is content in his dirt and poverty, and, because he is so, is as great a man as the most highly cultured. But he only is so while he is ignorant ; the moment light enters the dim mind the whole man turns towards it. So it is on the higher platform ; only the difficulty of penetrating the mind, of admitting the

light, is even greater. The Irish peasant loves his whisky, and while he can have it cares nothing for the great laws of morality and religion which are supposed to govern humanity and induce men to live temperately. The cultivated gourmand cares only for subtle tastes and perfect flavors ; but he is as blind as the merest peasant to the fact that there is anything beyond such gratifications. Like the boor he is deluded by a mirage that oppresses his soul ; and he fancies, having once obtained a sensuous joy that pleases him, to give himself the utmost satisfaction by endless repetition, till at last he reaches madness. The bouquet of the wine he loves enters his soul and poisons it, leaving him with no thoughts but those of sensuous desire ; and he is in the same hopeless state as the man who dies mad with drink. What good has the drunkard obtained by his madness ? None ; pain has at last swallowed up pleasure utterly, and death steps in to terminate the agony. The man suffers the final penalty for his persistent

ignorance of a law of nature as inexorable as that of gravitation,—a law which forbids a man to stand still. Not twice can the same cup of pleasure be tasted ; the second time it must contain either a grain of poison or a drop of the elixir of life.

The same argument holds good with regard to intellectual pleasures ; the same law operates. We see men who are the flower of their age in intellect, who pass beyond their fellows and tower over them, entering at last upon a fatal treadmill of thought, where they yield to the innate indolence of the soul and begin to delude themselves by the solace of repetition. Then comes the barrenness and lack of vitality,—that unhappy and disappointing state into which great men too often enter when middle life is just passed. The fire of youth, the vigor of the young intellect, conquers the inner inertia and makes the man scale heights of thought and fill his mental lungs with the free air of the mountains. But then at last the physical reaction sets in ; the physical machinery of

the brain loses its powerful impetus and begins to relax its efforts, simply because the youth of the body is at an end. Now the man is assailed by the great tempter of the race who stands forever on the ladder of life waiting for those who climb so far. He drops the poisoned drop into the ear, and from that moment all consciousness takes on a dullness, and the man becomes terrified lest life is losing its possibilities for him. He rushes back on to a familiar platform of experience, and there finds comfort in touching a well-known chord of passion or emotion. And too many having done this linger on, afraid to attempt the unknown, and satisfied to touch continually that chord which responds most readily. By this means they get the assurance that life is still burning within them. But at last their fate is the same as that of the gourmand and the drunkard. The power of the spell lessens daily as the machinery which feels loses its vitality; and the man endeavors to revive the old excitement and fervor by striking the note

more violently, by hugging the thing that makes him feel, by drinking the cup of poison to its fatal dregs. And then he is lost ; madness falls on his soul, as it falls on the body of the drunkard. Life has no longer any meaning for him, and he rushes wildly into the abysses of intellectual insanity. A lesser man who commits this great folly wearies the spirits of others by a dull clinging to familiar thought, by a persistent hugging of the treadmill which he asserts to be the final goal. The cloud that surrounds him is as fatal as death itself, and men who once sat at his feet turn away grieved, and have to look back at his early words in order to remember his greatness.

VII.

What is the cure for this misery and waste of effort? Is there one? Surely life itself has a logic in it and a law which makes existence possible ; otherwise chaos and madness would be the only state which would be attainable.

When a man drinks his first cup of pleasure his soul is filled with the unutterable joy that comes with a first, a fresh sensation. The drop of poison that he puts into the second cup, and which, if he persists in that folly, has to become doubled and trebled till at last the whole cup is poison,—that is the ignorant desire for repetition and intensification; this evidently means death, according to all analogy. The child becomes the man; he cannot retain his childhood and repeat and intensify the pleasures of childhood except by paying the inevitable price and becoming an idiot. The plant strikes its roots into the ground and throws up green leaves; then it blossoms and bears fruit. That plant which will only make roots or leaves, pausing persistently in its development, is regarded by the gardener as a thing which is useless and must be cast out.

The man who chooses the way of effort, and refuses to allow the sleep of indolence to dull his soul, finds in his pleasures a new and finer joy each time he tastes them,

—a something subtle and remote which removes them more and more from the state in which mere sensuousness is all; this subtle essence is that elixir of life which makes man immortal. He who tastes it and who will not drink unless it is in the cup finds life enlarge and the world grow great before his eager eyes. He recognizes the soul within the woman he loves, and passion becomes peace; he sees within his thought the finer qualities of spiritual truth, which is beyond the action of our mental machinery, and then instead of entering on the treadmill of intellectualisms he rests on the broad back of the eagle of intuition and soars into the fine air where the great poets found their insight; he sees within his own power of sensation, of pleasure in fresh air and sunshine, in food and wine, in motion and rest, the possibilities of the subtile man, the thing which dies not either with the body or the brain. The pleasures of art, of music, of light and loveliness,—within these forms, which men repeat till they find only the forms, he sees the glory of the Gates of

Gold, and passes through to find the new life beyond which intoxicates and strengthens, as the keen mountain air intoxicates and strengthens, by its very vigor. But if he has been pouring, drop by drop, more and more of the elixir of life into his cup, he is strong enough to breathe this intense air and to live upon it. Then if he die or if he live in physical form, alike he goes on and finds new and finer joys, more perfect and satisfying experiences, with every breath he draws in and gives out.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERY OF THRESHOLD.

I.

THERE is no doubt that at the entrance on a new phase of life something has to be given up. The child, when it has become the man, puts away childish things. Saint Paul showed in these words, and in many others which he has left us, that he had tasted of the elixir of life, that he was on his way towards the Gates of Gold. With each drop of the divine draught which is put into the cup of pleasure something is purged away from that cup to make room for the magic drop. For Nature deals with her children generously: man's cup is always full to the brim; and if he chooses to taste of the fine and life-giving essence he must cast

away something of the grosser and less sensitive part of himself. This has to be done daily, hourly, momentarily, in order that the draught of life may steadily increase. And to do this unflinchingly, a man must be his own schoolmaster, must recognize that he is always in need of wisdom, must be ready to practice any austerities, to use the birch-rod unhesitatingly against himself, in order to gain his end. It becomes evident to any one who regards the subject seriously, that only a man who has the potentialities in him both of the voluptuary and the stoic has any chance of entering the Golden Gates. He must be capable of testing and valuing to its most delicate fraction every joy existence has to give ; and he must be capable of denying himself all pleasure, and that without suffering from the denial. When he has accomplished the development of this double possibility, then he is able to begin sifting his pleasures and taking away from his consciousness those which belong absolutely to the man of clay. When those are put back, there is the

next range of more refined pleasures to be dealt with. The dealing with these which will enable a man to find the essence of life is not the method pursued by the stoic philosopher. The stoic does not allow that there is joy within pleasure, and by denying himself the one loses the other. But the true philosopher, who has studied life itself without being bound by any system of thought, sees that the kernel is within the shell, and that, instead of crunching up the whole nut like a gross and indifferent feeder, the essence of the thing is obtained by cracking the shell and casting it away. All emotion, all sensation, lends itself to this process, else it could not be a part of man's development, an essential of his nature. For that there is before him power, life, perfection, and that every portion of his passage thitherwards is crowded with the means of helping him to his goal, can only be denied by those who refuse to acknowledge life as apart from matter. Their mental position is so absolutely arbitrary that it is useless to

encounter or combat it. Through all time the unseen has been pressing on the seen, the immaterial overpowering the material; through all time the signs and tokens of that which is beyond matter have been waiting for the men of matter to test and weigh them. Those who will not do so have chosen the place of pause arbitrarily, and there is nothing to be done but let them remain there undisturbed, working that treadmill which they believe to be the utmost activity of existence.

II

There is no doubt that a man must educate himself to perceive that which is beyond matter, just as he must educate himself to perceive that which is in matter. Every one knows that the early life of a child is one long process of adjustment, of learning to understand the use of the senses with regard to their special provinces, and of practice in the exercise of difficult, com-

plex, yet imperfect organs entirely in reference to the perception of the world of matter. The child is in earnest and works on without hesitation if he means to live. Some infants born into the light of earth shrink from it, and refuse to attack the immense task which is before them, and which must be accomplished in order to make life in matter possible. These go back to the ranks of the unborn; we see them lay down their manifold instrument, the body, and fade into sleep. So it is with the great crowd of humanity when it has triumphed and conquered and enjoyed in the world of matter. The individuals in that crowd, which seems so powerful and confident in its familiar demesne, are infants in the presence of the immaterial universe. And we see them, on all sides, daily and hourly, refusing to enter it, sinking back into the ranks of the dwellers in physical life, clinging to the consciousnesses they have experienced and understand. The intellectual rejection of all purely spiritual knowledge is the most

marked indication of this indolence, of which thinkers of every standing are certainly guilty.

That the initial effort is a heavy one is evident, and it is clearly a question of strength, as well as of willing activity. But there is no way of acquiring this strength, or of using it when acquired, except by the exercise of the will. It is vain to expect to be born into great possessions. In the kingdom of life there is no heredity except from the man's own past. He has to accumulate that which is his. This is evident to any observer of life who uses his eyes without blinding them by prejudice; and even when prejudice is present, it is impossible for a man of sense not to perceive the fact. It is from this that we get the doctrine of punishment and salvation, either lasting through great ages after death, or eternal. This doctrine is a narrow and unintelligent mode of stating the fact in Nature that what a man sows that shall he reap. Swedenborg's great mind saw the fact so clearly that he hardened it

into a finality in reference to this particular existence, his prejudices making it impossible for him to perceive the possibility of new action when there is no longer the sensuous world to act in. He was too dogmatic for scientific observation, and would not see that, as the spring follows the autumn, and the day the night, so birth must follow death. He went very near the threshold of the Gates of Gold, and passed beyond mere intellectualism, only to pause at a point but one step farther. The glimpse of the life beyond which he had obtained appeared to him to contain the universe ; and on his fragment of experience he built up a theory to include all life, and refused progress beyond that state or any possibility outside it. This is only another form of the weary treadmill. But Swedenborg stands foremost in the crowd of witnesses to the fact that the Golden Gates exist and can be seen from the heights of thought, and he has cast us a faint surge of sensation from their threshold.

III.

When once one has considered the meaning of those Gates, it is evident that there is no other way out of this form of life except through them. They only can admit man to the place where he becomes the fruit of which manhood is the blossom. Nature is the kindest of mothers to those who need her; she never wearies of her children or desires them to lessen in multitude. Her friendly arms open wide to the vast throng who desire birth and to dwell in forms; and while they continue to desire it, she continues to smile a welcome. Why, then, should she shut her doors on any? When one life in her heart has not worn out a hundredth part of the soul's longing for sensation such as it finds there, what reason can there be for its departure to any other place? Surely the seeds of desire spring up where the sower has sown them. This seems but

reasonable ; and on this apparently self-evident fact the Indian mind has based its theory of re-incarnation, of birth and re-birth in matter, which has become so familiar a part of Eastern thought as no longer to need demonstration. The Indian knows it as the Western knows that the day he is living through is but one of many days which make up the span of a man's life. This certainty which is possessed by the Eastern with regard to natural laws that control the great sweep of the soul's existence is simply acquired by habits of thought. The mind of many is fixed on subjects which in the West are considered unthinkable. Thus it is that the East has produced the great flowers of the spiritual growth of humanity. On the mental steps of a million men Buddha passed through the Gates of Gold ; and because a great crowd pressed about the threshold he was able to leave behind him words which prove that those Gates will open.

CHAPTER III.

THE INITIAL EFFORT.

I.

It is very easily seen that there is no one point in a man's life or experience where he is nearer the soul of things than at any other. That soul, the sublime essence, which fills the air with a burnished glow, is there, behind the Gates it colors with itself. But that there is no one pathway to it is immediately perceived from the fact that this soul must from its very nature be universal. The Gates of Gold do not admit to any special place; what they do is to open for egress from a special place. Man passes through them when he casts off his limitation. He may burst the shell that holds him in darkness, tear the

veil that hides him from the eternal, at any point where it is easiest for him to do so; and most often this point will be where he least expects to find it. Men go in search of escape with the help of their minds, and lay down arbitrary and limited laws as to how to attain the, to them, unattainable. Many, indeed, have hoped to pass through by the way of religion, and instead they have formed a place of thought and feeling so marked and fixed that it seems as though long ages would be insufficient to enable them to get out of the rut. Some have believed that by the aid of pure intellect a way was to be found; and to such men we owe the philosophy and metaphysics which have prevented the race from sinking into utter sensuousness. But the end of the man who endeavors to live by thought alone is that he dwells in fantasies, and insists on giving them to other men as substantial food. Great is our debt to the metaphysicians and transcendentalists; but he who follows them to the bitter end, forgetting

that the brain is only one organ of use, will find himself dwelling in a place where a dull wheel of argument seems to turn forever on its axis, yet goes nowhither and carries no burden.

Virtue (or what seems to each man to be virtue, his own special standard of morality and purity) is held by those who practice it to be a way to heaven. Perhaps it is, to the heaven of the modern sybarite, the ethical voluptuary. It is as easy to become a gourmand in pure living and high thinking as in the pleasures of taste or sight or sound. Gratification is the aim of the virtuous man as well as of the drunkard; even if his life be a miracle of abstinence and self-sacrifice, a moment's thought shows that in pursuing this apparently heroic path he does but pursue pleasure. With him pleasure takes on a lovely form because his gratifications are those of a sweet savor, and it pleases him to give gladness to others rather than to enjoy himself at their expense. But the pure life and high thoughts are no more finalities in them-

selves than any other mode of enjoyment ; and the man who endeavors to find contentment in them must intensify his effort and continually repeat it,—all in vain. He is a green plant indeed, and the leaves are beautiful ; but more is wanted than leaves. If he persists in his endeavor blindly, believing that he has reached his goal when he has not even perceived it, then he finds himself in that dreary place where good is done perforce, and the deed of virtue is without the love that should shine through it. It is well for a man to lead a pure life, as it is well for him to have clean hands,—else he becomes repugnant. But virtue as we understand it now can no more have any special relation to the state beyond that to which we are limited than any other part of our constitution. Spirit is not a gas created by matter, and we cannot create our future by forcibly using one material agent and leaving out the rest. Spirit is the great life on which matter rests, as does the rocky world on the free and fluid ether ; whenever we can break our limitations we

find ourselves on that marvelous shore where Wordsworth once saw the gleam of the gold. When we enter there all the present must disappear alike,—virtue and vice, thought and sense. That a man reaps what he has sown must of course be true also; he has no power to carry virtue, which is of the material life, with him; yet the aroma of his good deeds is a far sweeter sacrifice than the odor of crime and cruelty. Yet it may be, however, that by the practice of virtue he will fetter himself into one groove, one changeless fashion of life in matter, so firmly that it is impossible for the mind to conceive that death is a sufficient power to free him, and cast him upon the broad and glorious ocean,—a sufficient power to undo for him the inexorable and heavy latch of the Golden Gate. And sometimes the man who has sinned so deeply that his whole nature is scarred and blackened by the fierce fire of selfish gratification is at last so utterly burned out and charred that from the very vigor of the passion light leaps forth. It would seem

more possible for such a man at least to reach the threshold of the Gates than for the mere ascetic or philosopher.

But it is little use to reach the threshold of the Gates without the power to pass through. And that is all that the sinner can hope to do by the dissolution of himself which comes from seeing his own soul. At least this appears to be so, inevitably because his condition is negative. The man who lifts the latch of the Golden Gate must do so with his own strong hand, must be absolutely positive. This we can see by analogy. In everything else in life, in every new step or development, it is necessary for a man to exercise his most dominant will in order to obtain it fully. Indeed in many cases, though he has every advantage and though he use his will to some extent, he will fail utterly of obtaining what he desires from lack of the final and unconquerable resolution. No education in the world will make a man an intellectual glory to his age, even if his powers are great; for unless he positively desires to

seize the flower of perfection, he will be but a dry scholar, a dealer in words, a proficient in mechanical thought, and a mere wheel of memory. And the man who has this positive quality in him will rise in spite of adverse circumstances, will recognize and seize upon the tide of thought which is his natural food, and will stand as a giant at last in the place he willed to reach. We see this practically every day in all walks of life. Wherefore it does not seem possible that the man who has simply succeeded through the passions in wrecking the dogmatic and narrow part of his nature should pass through those great Gates. But as he is not blinded by prejudice, nor has fastened himself to any treadmill of thought, nor caught the wheel of his soul in any deep rut of life, it would seem that if once the positive will might be born within him, he could at some time not hopelessly far distant lift his hand to the latch.

Undoubtedly it is the hardest task we have yet seen set us in life, that which we are now talking of, to free a man of all

prejudice, of all crystallized thought or feeling, of all limitations, yet develop within him the positive will. It seems too much of a miracle; for in ordinary life positive will is always associated with crystallized ideas. But many things which have appeared to be too much of a miracle for accomplishment have yet been done, even in the narrow experience of life given to our present humanity. All the past shows us that difficulty is no excuse for dejection, much less for despair; else the world would have been without the many wonders of civilization. Let us consider the thing more seriously, therefore, having once used our minds to the idea that it is not impossible.

The great initial difficulty is that of fastening the interest on that which is unseen. Yet this is done every day, and we have only to observe how it is done in order to guide our own conduct. Every inventor fastens his interest firmly on the unseen; and it entirely depends on the firmness of that attachment whether he is successful

or whether he fails. The poet who looks on to his moment of creation as that for which he lives, sees that which is invisible and hears that which is soundless.

Probably in this last analogy there is a clew as to the mode by which success in this voyage to the unknown bourn ("whence," indeed, "no traveler returns") is attained. It applies also to the inventor and to all who reached out beyond the ordinary mental and psychical level of humanity. The clew lies in that word "creation."

II.

The words "to create" are often understood by the ordinary mind to convey the idea of evolving something out of nothing. This is clearly not its meaning; we are mentally obliged to provide our Creator with chaos from which to produce the worlds. The tiller of the soil, who is the typical producer of social life, must have his material, his earth, his sky, rain, and sun, and the seeds to place within the

earth. Out of nothing he can produce nothing. Out of a void Nature cannot arise; there is that material beyond, behind, or within, from which she is shaped by our desire for a universe. It is an evident fact that the seeds and the earth, air, and water which cause them to germinate exist on every plane of action. If you talk to an inventor, you will find that far ahead of what he is now doing he can always perceive some other thing to be done which he cannot express in words because as yet he has not drawn it into our present world of objects. That knowledge of the unseen is even more definite in the poet, and more inexpressible until he has touched it with some part of that consciousness which he shares with other men. But in strict proportion to his greatness he lives in the consciousness which the ordinary man does not even believe can exist,—the consciousness which dwells in the greater universe, which breathes in the vaster air, which beholds a wider earth and sky, and snatches seeds from plants of giant growth.

It is this place of consciousness that we need to reach out to. That it is not reserved only for men of genius is shown by the fact that martyrs and heroes have found it and dwelt in it. It is not reserved for men of genius only, but it can only be found by men of great soul.

In this fact there is no need for discouragement. Greatness in man is popularly supposed to be a thing inborn. This belief must be a result of want of thought, of blindness to facts of nature. Greatness can only be attained by growth; that is continually demonstrated to us. Even the mountains, even the firm globe itself, these are great by dint of the mode of growth peculiar to that state of materiality,—accumulation of atoms. As the consciousness inherent in all existing forms passes into more advanced forms of life it becomes more active, and in proportion it acquires the power of growth by assimilation instead of accumulation. Looking at existence from this special point of view (which indeed is a difficult one to maintain for long,

as we habitually look at life in planes and forget the great lines which connect and run through these), we immediately perceive it to be reasonable to suppose that as we advance beyond our present standpoint the power of growth by assimilation will become greater and probably change into a method yet more rapid, easy, and unconscious. The universe is, in fact, full of magnificent promise for us, if we will but lift our eyes and see. It is that lifting of the eyes which is the first need and the first difficulty; we are so apt readily to be content with what we see within touch of our hands. It is the essential characteristic of the man of genius that he is comparatively indifferent to that fruit which is just within touch, and hungers for that which is afar on the hills. In fact he does not need the sense of contact to arouse longing. He knows that this distant fruit, which he perceives without the aid of the physical senses, is a subtler and a stronger food than any which appeals to them. And how is he rewarded! When he tastes

that fruit, how strong and sweet is its flavor, and what a new sense of life rushes upon him ! For in recognizing that flavor he has recognized the existence of the subtile senses, those which feed the life of the inner man ; and it is by the strength of that inner man, and by his strength only, that the latch of the Golden Gates can be lifted.

In fact it is only by the development and growth of the inner man that the existence of these Gates, and of that to which they admit, can be even perceived. While man is content with his gross senses and cares nothing for his subtile ones, the Gates remain literally invisible. As to the boor the gateway of the intellectual life is as a thing uncreate and non-existent, so to the man of the gross senses, even if his intellectual life is active, that which lies beyond is uncreate and non-existent, only because he does not open the book.

To the servant who dusts the scholar's library the closed volumes are meaningless ; they do not even appear to contain

a promise unless he also is a scholar, not merely a servant. It is possible to gaze throughout eternity upon a shut exterior from sheer indolence,—mental indolence, which is incredulity, and which at last men learn to pride themselves on; they call it skepticism, and talk of the reign of reason. It is no more a state to justify pride than that of the Eastern sybarite who will not even lift his food to his mouth; he is “reasonable” also in that he sees no value in activity, and therefore does not exercise it. So with the skeptic; decay follows the condition of inaction, whether it be mental, psychic, or physical.

III.

And now let us consider how the initial difficulty of fastening the interest on that which is unseen is to be overcome. Our gross senses refer only to that which is objective in the ordinary sense of the word; but just beyond this field of life there are

finer sensations which appeal to finer senses. Here we find the first clew to the stepping-stones we need. Man looks from this point of view like a point where many rays or lines center; and if he has the courage or the interest to detach himself from the simplest form of life, the point, and explore but a little way along these lines or rays, his whole being at once inevitably widens and expands, the man begins to grow in greatness. But it is evident, if we accept this illustration as a fairly true one, that the chief point of importance is to explore no more persistently on one line than another; else the result must be a deformity. We all know how powerful is the majesty and personal dignity of a forest tree which has had air enough to breathe, and room for its widening roots, and inner vitality with which to accomplish its unceasing task. It obeys the perfect natural law of growth, and the peculiar awe it inspires arises from this fact.

How is it possible to obtain recognition

of the inner man, to observe its growth and foster it?

Let us try to follow a little way the clew we have obtained, though words will probably soon be useless.

We must each travel alone and without aids, as the traveler has to climb alone when he nears the summit of the mountain. No beast of burden can help him there; neither can the gross senses or anything that touches the gross senses help him here. But for a little distance words may go with us.

The tongue recognizes the value of sweetness or piquancy in food. To the man whose senses are of the simplest order there is no other idea of sweetness than this. But a finer essence, a more highly placed sensation of the same order, is reached by another perception. The sweetness on the face of a lovely woman, or in the smile of a friend, is recognized by the man whose inner senses have even a little—a mere stirring of—vitality. To the one who has lifted the golden latch

the spring of sweet waters, the fountain itself whence all softness arises, is opened and becomes past of his heritage.

But before this fountain can be tasted, or any other spring reached, any source found, a heavy weight has to be lifted from the heart, an iron bar which holds it down and prevents it from arising in its strength.

The man who recognizes the flow of sweetness from its source through Nature, through all forms of life, he has lifted this, he has raised himself into that state in which there is no bondage. He knows that he is a part of the great whole, and it is this knowledge which is his heritage. It is through the breaking asunder of the arbitrary bond which holds him to his personal center that he comes of age and becomes ruler of his kingdom. As he widens out, reaching by manifold experience along those lines which center at the point where he stands embodied, he discovers that he has touch with all life, that he contains within himself the whole. And then he

has but to yield himself to the great force which we call good, to clasp it tightly with the grasp of his soul, and he is carried swiftly on to the great, wide waters of real living. What are those waters? In our present life we have but the shadow of the substance. No man loves without satiety, no man drinks wine without return of thirst. Hunger and longing darken the sky and make the earth unfriendly. What we need is an earth that will bear living fruit, a sky that will be always full of light. Needing this **positively**, we shall **surely find it**.

CHAPTER IV.**THE MEANING OF PAIN.****I.**

LOOK into the deep heart of life, whence pain comes to darken men's lives. She is always on the threshold, and behind her stands despair.

What are these two gaunt figures, and why are they permitted to be our constant followers ?

It is we who permit them, we who order them, as we permit and order the action of our bodies ; and we do so as unconsciously. But by scientific experiment and investigation we have learned much about our physical life, and it would seem as if we can obtain at least as much result with

regard to our inner life by adopting similar methods.

Pain arouses, softens, breaks, and destroys. Regarded from a sufficiently removed standpoint, it appears as medicine, as a knife, as a weapon, as a poison, in turn. It is an implement, a thing which is used, evidently. What we desire to discover is, who is the user; what part of ourselves is it that demands the presence of this thing so hateful to the rest?

Medicine is used by the physician, the knife by the surgeon; but the weapon of destruction is used by the enemy, the hater.

Is it, then, that we do not only use means, or desire to use means, for the benefit of our souls, but that also we wage warfare within ourselves, and do battle in the inner sanctuary? It would seem so; for it is certain that if man's will relaxed with regard to it he would no longer retain life in that state in which pain exists. Why does he desire his own hurt?

The answer may at first sight seem to be that he primarily desires pleasure, and so

is willing to continue on that battlefield where it wages war with pain for the possession of him, hoping always that pleasure will win the victory and take him home to herself. This is but the external aspect of the man's state. In himself he knows well that pain is co-ruler with pleasure, and that though the war wages always it never will be won. The superficial observer concludes that man submits to the inevitable. But that is a fallacy not worthy of discussion. A little serious thought shows us that man does not exist at all except by exercise of his positive qualities ; it is but logical to suppose that he chooses the state he will live in by the exercise of those same qualities.

Granted, then, for the sake of our argument, that he desires pain, why is it that he desires anything so annoying to himself ?

II.

If we carefully consider the constitution of man and its tendencies, it would seem

as if there were two definite directions in which he grows. He is like a tree which strikes its roots into the ground while it throws up young branches towards the heavens. These two lines which go outward from the central personal point are to him clear, definite, and intelligible. He calls one good and the other evil. But man is not, according to any analogy, observation, or experience, a straight line. Would that he were, and that life, or progress, or development, or whatever we choose to call it, meant merely following one straight road or another, as the religionists pretend it does. The whole question, the mighty problem, would be very easily solved then. But it is not so easy to go to hell as preachers declare it to be. It is as hard a task as to find one's way to the Golden Gate. A man may wreck himself utterly in sense-pleasure,—may debase his whole nature, as it seems,—yet he fails of becoming the perfect devil, for there is still the spark of divine light within him. He tries to choose the broad road which

leads to destruction, and enters bravely on his headlong career. But very soon he is checked and startled by some unthought-of tendency in himself,—some of the many other radiations which go forth from his center of self. He suffers as the body suffers when it develops monstrosities which impede its healthy action. He has created pain, and encountered his own creation. It may seem as if this argument is difficult of application with regard to physical pain. Not so, if man is regarded from a loftier standpoint than that we generally occupy. If he is looked upon as a powerful consciousness which forms its external manifestations according to its desires, then it is evident that physical pain results from deformity in those desires. No doubt it will appear to many minds that this conception of man is too gratuitous, and involves too large a mental leap into unknown places where proof is unobtainable. But if the mind is accustomed to look upon life from this standpoint, then very soon none other is acceptable; the threads of exist-

once, which to the purely materialistic observer appear hopelessly entangled, become separated and straightened, so that a new intelligibleness illumines the universe. The arbitrary and cruel Creator who inflicts pain and pleasure at will then disappears from the stage; and it is well, for he is indeed an unnecessary character, and, worse still, is a mere creature of straw, who cannot even strut upon the boards without being upheld on all sides by dogmatists. Man comes into this world, surely, on the same principle that he lives in one city of the earth or another; at all events, if it is too much to say that this is so, one may safely ask, why is it not so? There is neither for nor against which will appeal to the materialist, or which would weigh in a court of justice; but I aver this in favor of the argument,—that no man having once seriously considered it can go back to the formal theories of the skeptics. It is like putting on swaddling-clothes again.

Granting, then, for the sake of this argu-

ment, that man is a powerful consciousness who is his own creator, his own judge, and within whom lies all life in potentiality, even the ultimate goal, then let us consider why he causes himself to suffer.

If pain is the result of uneven development, of monstrous growths, of defective advance at different points, why does man not learn the lesson which this should teach him, and take pains to develop equally?

It would seem to me as if the answer to this question is that this is the very lesson which the human race is engaged in learning. Perhaps this may seem too bold a statement to make in the face of ordinary thinking, which either regards man as a creature of chance dwelling in chaos, or as a soul bound to the inexorable wheel of a tyrant's chariot and hurried on either to heaven or to hell. But such a mode of thought is after all but the same as that of the child who regards his parents as the final arbiters of his destinies, and in fact the gods or demons of his universe. As he grows he casts aside this idea, finding

that it is simply a question of coming of age, and that he is himself the king of life like any other man.

So it is with the human race. It is king of its world, arbiter of its own destiny, and there is none to say it nay. Who talk of Providence and chance have not paused to think.

Destiny, the inevitable, does indeed exist for the race and for the individual; but who can ordain this save the man himself? There is no clew in heaven or earth to the existence of any ordainer other than the man who suffers or enjoys that which is ordained. We know so little of our own constitution, we are so ignorant of our divine functions, that it is impossible for us yet to know how much or how little we are actually fate itself. But this at all events we know,—that so far as any provable perception goes, no clew to the existence of an ordainer has yet been discovered; whereas if we give but a very little attention to the life about us in order to observe the action of the man upon his own future, we soon

perceive this power as an actual force in operation. It is visible, although our range of vision is so very limited.

The man of the world, pure and simple, is by far the best practical observer and philosopher with regard to life, because he is not blinded by any prejudices. He will be found always to believe that as a man sows so shall he reap. And this is so evidently true when it is considered, that if one takes the larger view, including all human life, it makes intelligible the awful Nemesis which seems consciously to pursue the human race,—that inexorable appearance of pain in the midst of pleasure. The great Greek poets saw this apparition so plainly that their recorded observation has given to us younger and blinder observers the idea of it. It is unlikely that so materialistic a race as that which has grown up all over the West would have discovered for itself the existence of this terrible factor in human life without the assistance of the older poets,—the poets of the past. And in this we may notice, by the way, one dis-

tinct value of the study of the classics,—that the great ideas and facts about human life which the superb ancients put into their poetry shall not be absolutely lost as are their arts. No doubt the world will flower again, and greater thoughts and more profound discoveries than those of the past will be the glory of the men of the future efflorescence; but until that far-off day comes we cannot prize too dearly the treasures left us.

There is one aspect of the question which seems at first sight positively to negative this mode of thought; and that is the suffering in the apparently purely physical body of the dumb beings,—young children, idiots, animals,—and their desperate need of the power which comes of any sort of knowledge to help them through their sufferings.

The difficulty which will arise in the mind with regard to this comes from the untenable idea of the separation of the soul from the body. It is supposed by all those who look only at material life (and espe-

cially by the physicians of the flesh) that the body and the brain are a pair of partners who live together hand in hand and react one upon another. Beyond that they recognize no cause and therefore allow of none. They forget that the brain and the body are as evidently mere mechanism as the hand or the foot. There is the inner man—the soul—behind, using all these mechanisms; and this is as evidently the truth with regard to all the existences we know of as with regard to man himself. We cannot find any point in the scale of being at which soul-causation ceases or can cease. The dull oyster must have that in him which makes him choose the inactive life he leads; none else can choose it for him but the soul behind, which makes him be. How else can he be where he is, or be at all? Only by the intervention of an impossible creator called by some name or other. -

It is because man is so idle, so indisposed to assume or accept responsibility, that he falls back upon this temporary makeshift

of a creator. It is temporary indeed, for it can only last during the activity of the particular brain power which finds it place among us. When the man drops this mental life behind him, he of necessity leaves with it its magic lantern and the pleasant illusions he has conjured up by its aid. That must be a very uncomfortable moment, and must produce a sense of nakedness not to be approached by any other sensation. It would seem as well to save one's self this disagreeable experience by refusing to accept unreal phantasms as things of flesh and blood and power. Upon the shoulders of the Creator man likes to thrust the responsibility not only of his capacity for sinning and the possibility of his salvation, but of his very life itself, his very consciousness. It is a poor Creator that he thus contents himself with,—one who is pleased with a universe of puppets, and amused by pulling their strings. If he is capable of such enjoyment, he must yet be in his infancy. Perhaps that is so, after all ; the God within us is in his infancy.

and refuses to recognize his high estate. If indeed the soul of man is subject to the laws of growth, of decay, and of re-birth as to its body, then there is no wonder at its blindness. But this is evidently not so; for the soul of man is of that order of life which causes shape and form, and is unaffected itself by these things,—of that order of life which like the pure, the abstract flame burns wherever it is lit. This cannot be changed or affected by time, and is of its very nature superior to growth and decay. It stands in that primeval place which is the only throne of God,—that place whence forms of life emerge and to which they return. That place is the central point of existence, where there is a permanent spot of life as there is in the midst of the heart of man. It is by the equal development of that,—first by the recognition of it, and then by its equal development upon the many radiating lines of experience,—that man is at last enabled to reach the Golden Gate and lift the latch. The process is the gradual recognition of the god in himself

the goal is reached when that godhood is consciously restored to its right glory.

III.

The first thing which it is necessary for the soul of man to do in order to engage in this great endeavor of discovering true life is the same thing that the child first does in its desire for activity in the body,—he must be able to stand. It is clear that the power of standing, of equilibrium, of concentration, of uprightness, in the soul, is a quality of a marked character. The word that presents itself most readily as descriptive of this quality is “confidence.”

To remain still amid life and its changes, and stand firmly on the chosen spot, is a feat which can only be accomplished by the man who has confidence in himself and in his destiny. Otherwise the hurrying forms of life, the rushing tide of men, the great floods of thought, must inevitably carry

him with them, and then he will lose **that** place of consciousness whence it was possible to start on the great enterprise. For it *must* be done knowingly, and without pressure from without,—this act of the new-born man. All the great ones of the earth have possessed this confidence, and have stood firmly on that place which was to them the one solid spot in the universe. To each man this place is of necessity different. Each man must find his own earth and his own heaven.

We have the instinctive desire to relieve pain, but we work in externals in this as in everything else. We simply alleviate it; and if we do more, and drive it from its first chosen stronghold, it reappears in some other place with reinforced vigor. If it is eventually driven off the physical plane by persistent and successful effort, it reappears on the mental or emotional planes where no man can touch it. That this is so is easily seen by those who connect the various planes of sensation, and who observe life with that additional illumination.

Men habitually regard these different forms of feeling as actually separate, whereas in fact they are evidently only different sides of one center,—the point of personality. If that which arises in the center, the fount of life, demands some hindered action, and consequently causes pain, the force thus created being driven from one stronghold must find another; it cannot be driven out. And all the blendings of human life which cause emotion and distress exist for its use and purposes as well as for those of pleasure. Both have their home in man; both demand their expression of right. The marvelously delicate mechanism of the human frame is constructed to answer to their lightest touch; the extraordinary intricacies of human relations evolve themselves, as it were, for the satisfaction of these two great opposites of the soul.

Pain and pleasure stand apart and separate, as do the two sexes; and it is in the merging, the making the two into one, that joy and deep sensation and profound

peace are obtained. Where there is neither male nor female, neither pain nor pleasure, there is the god in man dominant, and then is life real.

To state the matter in this way may savor too much of the dogmatist who utters his assertions uncontradicted from a safe pulpit; but it is dogmatism only as a scientist's record of effort in a new direction is dogmatism. Unless the existence of the Gates of Gold can be proved to be real, and not the mere phantasmagoria of fanciful visionaries, then they are not worth talking about at all. In the nineteenth century hard facts or legitimate arguments alone appeal to men's minds; and so much the better. For unless the life we advance towards is increasingly real and actual, it is worthless, and time is wasted in going after it. Reality is man's greatest need, and he demands to have it at all hazards, at any price. Be it so. No one doubts he is right. Let us then go in search of reality.

IV.

One definite lesson learned by all acute sufferers will be of the greatest service to us in this consideration. In intense pain a point is reached where it is indistinguishable from its opposite, pleasure. This is indeed so, but few have the heroism or the strength to suffer to such a far point. It is as difficult to reach it by the other road. Only a chosen few have the gigantic capacity for pleasure which will enable them to travel to its other side. Most have but enough strength to enjoy and to become the slave of the enjoyment. Yet man has undoubtedly within himself the heroism needed for the great journey ; else how is it that martyrs have smiled amid the torture ? How is it that the profound sinner who lives for pleasure can at last feel stir within himself the divine afflatus ?

In both those cases the possibility has arisen of finding the way ; but too often

that possibility is killed by the overbalances of the startled nature. The martyr has acquired a passion for pain and lives in the idea of heroic suffering; the sinner becomes blinded by the thought of virtue and worships it as an end, an object, a thing divine in itself; whereas it can only be divine as it is part of that infinite whole which includes vice as well as virtue. How is it possible to divide the infinite,—that which is one? It is as reasonable to lend divinity to any object as to take a cup of water from the sea and declare that in that is contained the ocean. You cannot separate the ocean; the salt water is part of the great sea and must be so; but nevertheless you do not hold the sea in your hand, Men so longingly desire personal power that they are ready to put infinity into a cup, the divine idea into a formula, in order that they may fancy themselves in possession of it. These only are those who cannot rise and approach the Gates of Gold, for the great breath of life confuses them; there are struck with horror to find how

great it is. The idol-worshiper keeps an image of his idol in his heart and burns a candle always before it. It is his own, and he is pleased at that thought, even if he bow in reverence before it. In how many virtuous and religious men does not this same state exist? In the recesses of the soul the lamp is burning before a household god,—a thing possessed by its worshiper and subject to him. Men cling with desperate tenacity to these dogmas, these moral laws, these principles and modes of faith which are their household gods, their personal idols. Bid them burn the unceasing flame in reverence only to the infinite, and they turn from you. Whatever their manner of scorning your protest may be, within themselves it leaves a sense of aching void. For the noble soul of the man, that potential king which is within us all, knows full well that this household idol may be cast down and destroyed at any moment,—that it is without finality in itself, without any real and absolute life. And he has been content in his possession,

forgetting that anything possessed can only by the immutable laws of life be held temporarily. He has forgotten that the infinite is his only friend; he has forgotten that in its glory is his only home,—that it alone can be his god. There he feels as if he is homeless; but that amid the sacrifices he offers to his own especial idol there is for him a brief resting-place; and for this he clings passionately to it.

Few have the courage even slowly to face the great desolateness which lies outside themselves, and must lie there so long as they cling to the person which they represent, the “I” which is to them the center of the world, the cause of all life. In their longing for a God they find the reason for the existence of one; in their desire for a sense-body and a world to enjoy in, lies to them the cause of the universe. These beliefs may be hidden very deep beneath the surface, and be indeed scarcely accessible; but in the fact that they are there is the reason why the man holds himself up

right. To himself he is himself the infinite and the God ; he holds the ocean in a cup. In this delusion he nurtures the egoism which makes life pleasure and makes pain pleasant. In this profound egoism is the very cause and source of the existence of pleasure and of pain. For unless man vacillated between these two, and ceaselessly reminded himself by sensation that he exists, he would forget it. And in this fact lies the whole answer to the question, " Why does man create pain for his own discomfort ? "

The strange and mysterious fact remains unexplained as yet, that man in so deluding himself is merely interpreting Nature backwards and putting into the words of death the meaning of life. For that man does indeed hold within him the infinite, and that the ocean is really in the cup, is an incontestable truth ; but it is only so because the cup is absolutely non-existent. It is merely an experience of the infinite, having no permanence, liable to be shattered at any instant. It is in the claiming

of reality and permanence for the four walls of his personality, that man makes the vast blunder which plunges him into a prolonged series of unfortunate incidents, and intensifies continually the existence of his favorite forms of sensation. Pleasure and pain become to him more real than the great ocean of which he is a part and where his home is; he perpetually knocks himself painfully against these walls where he feels, and his tiny self oscillates within his chosen prison.

CHAPTER V.

THE SECRET OF STRENGTH.

I.

STRENGTH to step forward is the primary need of him who has chosen his path. Where is this to be found? Looking round, it is not hard to see where other men find their strength. Its source is profound conviction. Through this great moral power is brought to birth in the natural life of the man that which enables him, however frail he may be, to go on and conquer. Conquer what? Not continents, not worlds, but himself. Through that supreme victory is obtained the entrance to the whole, where all that might be conquered and obtained by effort becomes at once not his, but himself.

To put on armor and go forth to war, taking the chances of death in the hurry of the fight, is an easy thing ; to stand still amid the jangle of the world, to preserve stillness within the turmoil of the body, to hold silence amid the thousand cries of the senses and desires, and then, stripped of all armor and without hurry or excitement take the deadly serpent of self and kill it, is no easy thing. Yet that is what has to be done ; and it can only be done in the moment of equilibrium when the enemy is disconcerted by the silence.

But there is needed for this supreme moment a strength such as no hero of the battle-field needs. A great soldier must be filled with the profound convictions of the justness of his cause and the rightness of his method. The man who wars against himself and wins the battle can do it only when he knows that in that war he is doing the one thing which is worth doing, and when he knows that in doing it he is winning heaven and hell as his servitors. Yes, he stands on both. He

needs no heaven where pleasure comes as a long-promised reward; he fears no hell where pain waits to punish him for his sins. For he has conquered once for all that shifting serpent in himself which turns from side to side in its constant desire of contact, in its perpetual search after pleasure and pain. Never again (the victory once really won) can he tremble or grow exultant at any thought of that which the future holds. Those burning sensations which seemed to him to be the only proofs of his existence are his no longer. How, then, can he know that he lives? He knows it only by argument. And in time he does not care to argue about it. For him there is then peace; and he will find in that peace the power he has coveted. Then he will know what is that faith which can remove mountains.

II.

Religion holds a man back from the path, prevents his stepping forward, for various

very plain reasons. First, it makes the vital mistake of distinguishing between good and evil. Nature knows no such distinction ; and the moral and social laws set us by our religions are as temporary, as much a thing of our own special mode and form of existence, as are the moral and social laws of the ants or the bees. We pass out of that state in which these things appear to be final, and we forget them forever. This is easily shown, because a man of broad habits of thought and of intelligence must modify his code of life when he dwells among another people. These people among whom he is an alien have their own deep-rooted religions and hereditary convictions, against which he cannot offend. Unless his is an abjectly narrow and unthinking mind, he sees that their form of law and order is as good as his own. What then can he do but reconcile his conduct gradually to their rules? And then if he dwells among them many years the sharp edge of difference is worn away, and he forgets at last where their faith ends

and his commences. Yet is it for his own people to say he has done wrong, if he has injured no man and remained just ?

I am not attacking law and order ; I do not speak of these things with rash dislike. In their place they are as vital and necessary as the code which governs the life of a beehive is to its successful conduct. What I wish to point out is that law and order in themselves are quite temporary and unsatisfactory. When a man's soul passes away from its brief dwelling-place, thoughts of law and order do not accompany it. If it is strong, it is the ecstasy of true being and real life which it becomes possessed of, as all know who have watched by the dying. If the soul is weak, it faints and fades away, overcome by the first flush of the new life.

Am I speaking too positively ? Only those who live in the active life of the moment, who have not watched beside the dead and dying who have not walked the battlefield and looked in the faces of men in their last agony, will say so. The

strong man goes forth from his body exultant.

Why? Because he is no longer held back and made to quiver by hesitation. In the strange moment of death he has had release given him; and with a sudden passion of delight he recognizes that it is release. Had he been sure of this before, he would have been a great sage, a man to rule the world, for he would have had the power to rule himself and his own body. That release from the chains of ordinary life can be obtained as easily during life as by death. It only needs a sufficiently profound conviction to enable the man to look on his body with the same emotions as he would look on the body of another man, or on the bodies of a thousand men. In contemplating a battlefield it is impossible to realize the agony of every sufferer; why, then, realize your own pain more keenly than another's? Mass the whole together, and look at it all from a wider standpoint than that of the individual life. That you actually feel your own

physical wound is a weakness of your limitation. The man who is developed psychically feels the wound of another as keenly as his own, and does not feel his own at all if he is strong enough to will it so. Every one who has examined at all seriously into psychic conditions knows this to be a fact, more or less marked, according to the psychic development. In many instances the psychic is more keenly and selfishly aware of his own pain than of any other person's; but that is when the development, marked perhaps so far as it has gone, only reaches a certain point. It is the power which carries the man to the margin of that consciousness which is profound peace and vital activity. It can carry him no further. But if he has reached its margin he is freed from the paltry dominion of his own self. That is the first great release. Look at the sufferings which come upon us from our narrow and limited experience and sympathy. We each stand quite alone, a solitary unit, a pygmy in the world. What good fortune can we expect? The

great life of the world rushes by, and we are in danger each instant that it will overwhelm us or even utterly destroy us. There is no defense to be offered to it ; no opposition army can be set up, because in this life every man fights his own battle against every other man, and no two can be united under the same banner. There is only one way of escape from this terrible danger which we battle against every hour. Turn round, and instead of standing against the forces, join them ; become one with Nature, and go easily upon her path. Do not resist or resent the circumstances of life any more than the plants resent the rain and the wind. Then suddenly, to your own amazement, you find you have time and strength to spare, to use in the great battle which it is inevitable every man must fight,—that in himself, that which leads to his own conquest.

Some might say, to his own destruction. And why ? Because from the hour when he first tastes the splendid reality of living he forgets more and more his individual

self. No longer does he fight for it, or pit its strength against the strength of others. No longer does he care to defend or to feed it. Yet when he is thus indifferent to its welfare, the individual self grows more stalwart and robust, like the prairie grasses and the trees of untrodden forests. It is a matter of indifference to him whether this is so or not. Only, if it is so, he has a fine instrument ready to his hand; and in due proportion to the completeness of his indifference to it is the strength and beauty of his personal self. This is readily seen; a garden flower becomes a mere degenerate copy of itself if it is simply neglected; a plant must be cultivated to the highest pitch, and benefit by the whole of the gardener's skill, or else it must be a pure savage, wild, and fed only by the earth and sky. Who cares for any intermediate state? What value or strength is there in the neglected garden rose which has the canker in every bud? For diseased or dwarfed blossoms are sure to result from an arbitrary change of condition, resulting

from the neglect of the man who has hitherto been the providence of the plant in its unnatural life. But there are wind-blown plains where the daisies grow tall, with moon faces such as no cultivation can produce in them. Cultivate, then, to the very utmost; forget no inch of your garden ground, no smallest plant that grows in it; make no foolish pretense nor fond mistake in the fancy that you are ready to forget it, and so subject it to the frightful consequences of half-measures. The plant that is watered to-day and forgotten to-morrow must dwindle or decay. The plant that looks for no help but from Nature itself measures its strength at once, and either dies and is re-created or grows into a great tree whose boughs fill the sky. But make no mistake like the religionists and some philosophers; leave no part of yourself neglected while you know it to be yourself. While the ground is the gardener's it is his business to tend it; but some day a call may come to him from another country or from death itself, and in a moment he is

no longer the gardener, his business is at an end, he has no more duty of that kind at all. Then his favorite plants suffer and die, and the delicate ones become one with the earth. But soon fierce Nature claims the place for her own, and covers it with thick grass or giant weeds, or nurses some sapling in it till its branches shade the ground. Be warned, and tend your garden to the utmost, till you can pass away utterly and let it return to Nature and become the wind-blown plain where the wild-flowers grow. Then, if you pass that way and look at it, whatever has happened will neither grieve nor elate you. For you will be able to say, "I am the rocky ground, I am the great tree, I am the strong daisies," indifferent which it is that flourishes where once your rose-trees grew. But you must have learned to study the stars to some purpose before you dare to neglect your roses, and omit to fill the air with their cultivated fragrance. You must know your way through the trackless air, and from thence to the pure ether; you must

be ready to lift the bar of the Golden Gate.

Cultivate, I say, and neglect nothing. Only remember, all the while you tend and water, that you are impudently usurping the tasks of Nature herself. Having usurped her work, you must carry it through until you have reached a point when she has no power to punish you, when you are not afraid of her, but can with a bold front return her her own. She laughs in her sleeve, the mighty mother, watching you with covert, laughing eye, ready relentlessly to cast the whole of your work into the dust if you do but give her the chance, if you turn idler and grow careless. The idler is father of the madman in the sense that the child is the father of the man. Nature has put her vast hand on him and crushed the whole edifice. The gardener and his rose-trees are alike broken and stricken by the great storm which her movement has created ; they lie helpless till the sand is swept over them and they are buried in a weary wilderness. From this desert spot Nature

herself will recreate, and will use the ashes of the man who dared to face her as indifferently as the withered leaves of his plants. His body, soul, and spirit are all alike claimed by her.

III.

The man who is strong, who has resolved to find the unknown path, takes with the utmost care every step. He utters no idle word, he does no unconsidered action, he neglects no duty or office however homely or however difficult. But while his eyes and hands and feet are thus fulfilling their tasks, new eyes and hands and feet are being born within him. For his passionate and unceasing desire is to go that way on which the subtile organs only can guide him. The physical world he has learned, and knows how to use; gradually his power is passing on, and he recognizes the psychic world. But he has to learn this world and know how to use it, and he dare

not lose hold of the life he is familiar with till he has taken hold of that with which he is unfamiliar. When he has acquired such power with his psychic organs as the infant has with its physical organs when it first opens its lungs, then is the hour for the great adventure. How little is needed—yet how much that is! The man does but need the psychic body to be formed in all parts, as is an infant's; he does but need the profound and unshakable conviction which impels the infant, that the new life is desirable. Once those conditions gained and he may let himself live in the new atmosphere and look up to the new sun. But then he must remember to check his new experience by the old. He is breathing still, though differently; he draws air into his lungs, and takes life from the sun. He has been born into the psychic world, and depends now on the psychic air and light. His goal is not here: this is but a subtle repetition of physical life; he has to pass through it according to similar laws. He must study, learn,

grow, and conquer; never forgetting the while that his goal is that place where there is no air nor any sun or moon.

Do not imagine that in this line of progress the man himself is being moved or changing his place. Not so. The truest illustration of the process is that of cutting through layers of crust or skin. The man, having learned his lesson fully, casts off the physical life; having learned his lesson fully, casts off the psychic life; having learned his lesson fully, casts off the contemplative life, or life of adoration.

All are cast aside at last, and he enters the great temple where any memory of self or sensation is left outside as the shoes are cast from the feet of the worshiper. That temple is the place of his own pure divinity, the central flame which, however obscured, has animated him through all these struggles. And having found this sublime home he is sure as the heavens themselves. He remains still, filled with all knowledge and power. The outer man, the adoring, the acting, the living personi-

fication, goes its own way hand in hand with Nature, and shows all the superb strength of the savage growth of the earth, lit by that instinct which contains knowledge. For in that inmost sanctuary, in the actual temple, the man has found the subtile essence of Nature herself. No longer can there be any difference between them or any half-measures. And now comes the hour of action and power. In that inmost sanctuary all is to be found : God and his creatures, the fiends who prey on them, those among men who have been loved, those who have been hated. Difference between them exists no longer. Then the soul of man laughs in its strength and fearlessness, and goes forth into the world in which its actions are needed, and causes these actions to take place without apprehension, alarm, fear, regret, or joy.

This state is possible to man while yet he lives in the physical ; for men have attained it while living. It alone can make actions in the physical divine and true.

Life among objects of sense must forever

be an outer shape to the sublime soul,—it can only become powerful life, the life of accomplishment, when it is animated by the crowned and indifferent god that sits in the sanctuary.

The obtaining of this condition is so supremely desirable because from the moment it is entered there is no more trouble, no more anxiety, no more doubt or hesitation. As a great artist paints his picture fearlessly and never committing any error which causes him regret, so the man who has formed his inner self deals with his life.

But that is when the condition is entered. That which we who look towards the mountains hunger to know is the mode of entrance and the way to the Gate. The Gate is that Gate of Gold barred by a heavy bar of iron. The way to the threshold, of it turns a man giddy and sick. It seems no path, it seems to end perpetually. its way lies along hideous precipices, it loses itself in deep waters.

Once crossed and the way found it ap

pears wonderful that the difficulty should have looked so great. For the path where it disappears does but turn abruptly, its line upon the precipice edge is wide enough for the feet, and across the deep waters that look so treacherous there is always a ford and a ferry. So it happens in all profound experiences of human nature. When the first grief tears the heart asunder it seems that the path has ended and a blank darkness taken the place of the sky. And yet by groping the soul passes on, and that difficult and seemingly hopeless turn in the road is passed.

So with many another form of human torture. Sometimes throughout a long period or a whole lifetime the path of existence is perpetually checked by what seem like insurmountable obstacles. Grief, pain, suffering, the loss of all that is beloved or valued, rise up before the terrified soul and check it at every turn. Who places those obstacles there? The reason shrinks at the childish dramatic picture which the religionists place before it,—God permit

ting the Devil to torment His creatures for their ultimate good! When will that ultimate good be attained? The idea involved in this picture supposes an end, a goal. There is none. We can any one of us safely assent to that; for as far as human observation, reason, thought, intellect, or instinct can reach towards grasping the mystery of life, all data obtained show that the path is endless and that eternity cannot be blinked and converted by the idling soul into a million years.

In man, taken individually or as a whole, there clearly exists a double constitution. I am speaking roughly now, being well aware that the various schools of philosophy cut him up and subdivide him according to their several theories. What I mean is this: that two great tides of emotion sweep through his nature, two great forces guide his life; the one makes him an animal, and the other makes him a god. No brute of the earth is so brutal as the man who subjects his godly power to his animal power. This is a matter of course, because

the whole force of the double nature is then used in one direction. The animal pure and simple obeys his instincts only and desires no more than to gratify his love of pleasure; he pays but little regard to the existence of other beings except in so far as they offer him pleasure or pain; he knows nothing of the abstract love of cruelty or of any of those vicious tendencies of the human being which have in themselves their own gratification. Thus the man who becomes a beast has a million times the grasp of life over the natural beast, and that which in the pure animal is sufficiently innocent enjoyment, uninterrupted by an arbitrary moral standard, becomes in him vice, because it is gratified on principle. Moreover he turns all the divine powers of his being into this channel, and degrades his soul by making it the slave of his senses. The god, deformed and disguised, waits on the animal and feeds it.

Consider then whether it is not possible to change the situation. The man himself is king of the country in which this strange

spectacle is seen. He allows the beast to usurp the place of the god because for the moment the beast pleases his capricious royal fancy the most. This cannot last always ; why let it last any longer ? So long as the animal rules there will be the keenest sufferings in consequence of change, of the vibration between pleasure and pain, of the desire for prolonged and pleasant physical life. And the god in his capacity of servant adds a thousand-fold to all this, by making physical life so much more filled with keenness of pleasure,—rare, voluptuous, æsthetic pleasure,—and by intensity of pain so passionate that one knows not where it ends and where pleasure commences. So long as the god serves, so long the life of the animal will be enriched and increasingly valuable. But let the king resolve to change the face of his court and forcibly evict the animal from the chair of state, restoring the god to the place of divinity.

Ah, the profound peace that falls upon the palace ! All is indeed changed. No

longer is there the fever of personal longings or desires, no longer is there any rebellion or distress, no longer any hunger for pleasure or dread of pain. It is like a great calm descending on a stormy ocean; it is like the soft rain of summer falling on parched ground; it is like the deep pool found amidst the weary, thirsty labyrinths of the unfriendly forest.

But there is much more than this. Not only is man more than an animal because there is the god in him, but he is more than a god because there is the animal in him.

Once force the animal into his rightful place, that of the inferior, and you find yourself in possession of a great force hitherto unsuspected and unknown. The god as servant adds a thousand-fold to the pleasures of the animal; the animal as servant adds a thousand-fold to the powers of the god. And it is upon the union, the right relation of these two forces in himself, that man stands as a strong king, and is enabled to raise his hand and lift the bar of the Golden Gate. When these forces

are unfitly related, then the king is but a crowned voluptuary, without power, and whose dignity does but mock him; for the animals, undivine, at least know peace and are not torn by vice and despair.

That is the whole secret. That is what makes man strong, powerful, able to grasp heaven and earth in his hands. Do not fancy it is easily done. Do not be deluded into the idea that the religious or the virtuous man does it! Not so. They do no more than fix a standard, a routine, a law, by which they hold the animal in check. The god is compelled to serve him in a certain way, and does so, pleasing him with the beliefs and cherished fantasies of the religious, with the lofty sense of personal pride which makes the joy of the virtuous. These special and canonized vices are things too low and base to be possible to the pure animal, whose only inspirer is Nature herself, always fresh as the dawn. The god in man, degraded, is a thing unspeakable in its infamous power of production.

The animal in man, elevated, is a thing unimaginable in its great powers of service and of strength.

You forget, you who let your animal self live on, merely checked and held within certain bounds, that it is a great force, an integral portion of the animal life of the world you live in. With it you can sway men, and influence the very world itself, more or less perceptibly according to your strength. The god, given his right place, will so inspire and guide this extraordinary creature, so educate and develop it, so force it into action and recognition of its kind, that it will make you tremble when you recognize the power that has awakened within you. The animal in yourself will then be a king among the animals of the world.

This is the secret of the old-world magicians, who made Nature serve them and work miracles every day for their convenience. This is the secret of the coming race which Lord Lytton foreshadowed for us.

But this power can only be attained by giving the god the sovereignty. Make your animal ruler over yourself, and he will never rule others.

EPILOGUE.

SECRETED and hidden in the heart of the world and in the heart of man is the light which can illumine all life, the future and the past. Shall we not search for it? Surely some must do so. And then perhaps those will add what is needed to this poor fragment of thought.

THE END.



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